canada \$14 volume 17 • annual issue 2002/03 Sports showed me how not to be afraid of losing. I learned to lose and not lose my dignity. Sebastian Junger

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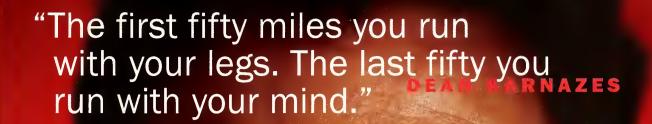
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2002 PROVINCETOWN ARTS | 7



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ROBERT ADAMCIK, "ROSA SINE SPINTS"



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May 24 - June 6 STUART DUNKEL & BRETT WALLACE Reception Friday, May 24 7-40 PM

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> June 29 - July 6 PHILLIP SPINKS

Meet the Artist Saturday, June 29 7-10 PM

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August 2 - August 15 ROBERT ADAMCIK & JEANNIE MOTHERWELL Reception Friday, August 2 7-10 PM

> August 16th - September 5 SUMMER SALON

Reception Friday, August 16 7-10 PM

September 6 - September 19 ANN SCOTT & LAURENCE YOUNG Reception Friday, September 6 7-10 PM

September 20 – October 3 LYDIA MARTIN & MARY BETH MAISEL

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October 4 - October 17 **DEBORAH BARLOW & DENISE DUBROY** Reception Friday, October 11 7-10 PM

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SUMMER 2002 SCHEDULE

MAY 10 - MAY 29
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(Tuesday to Sunday 11-6pm.)
Gallery artists and invited guests.
Closing party Sun., May 26, 7-9pm

MAY 31 - JUNE 19
Bob Bailey
Breon Dunigan
Jay Critchley
office: Jenny Ding

JUNE 21 - JULY 10
Quentin Curry
Peter Hutchinson
Francie Randolph
Dawn Southworth
office: Mary Behrens

JULY 12 - JULY 31
Tjibbe Hooghiemstra
Peik Larsen
Joel Meyerowitz
office: Orly Cogan/ Eric Conrad

AUGUST 2 - AUGUST 21 Anna Poor Tabitha Vevers Daniel Ranalli office: Danica Phelps

AUGUST 23 - SEPTEMBER 11
Paul Bowen
Kahn/ Selesnick
Jim Peters
office: Sterck & Rozo

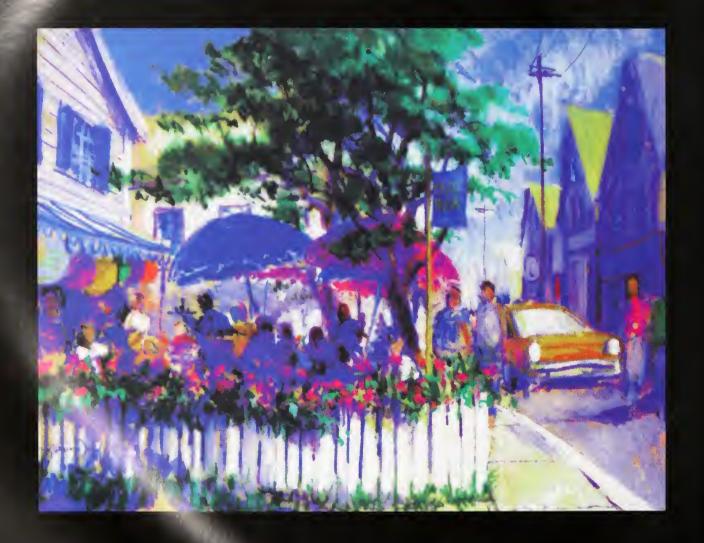
SEPTEMBER 6 - OCTOBER 27 "OUTDOOR SCULPTURE" Gallery artists and invited guests, on adjacent tennis court.
Closing party Sat., Oct 26, 7-9pm

SEPTEMBER 13 - OCTOBER 2
Gregory Amenoff
Robert Beauchamp (estate)
Tony Vevers
Hiroyuki Hamada

OCTOBER 4 - OCTOBER 27
"INTER-SEX-TION: COUPLES IN
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Closing party Sat., Oct 26, 7-9pm

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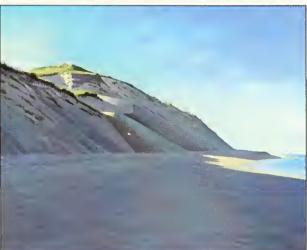


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July 6 Elizabeth Pratt Watercolors

- 13 Borboro Cohen Book signing, prints, pointings & sculptures Joyce Johnson Sculptures
- 20 Lois Griffel Oils
- 27 Poul Schulenburg Oils

August 3 Steve Allrich Oils

- 10 Molcolm Wells Unhung
- 17 Arnold Desmorois Oils
- 24 Chorles Sovek New works
- 31 Joonno Hudgens Oils, John Rogers Oils, Amy Sonders Postels

Top left Two white beach chairs and a pink umbrella Pointed Poloroid Print Borbaro Cohen Top right *Profusion of Roses* Oil Steve Allrich Left *Lote Afternoon, Truro* Oil Poul Schulenburg

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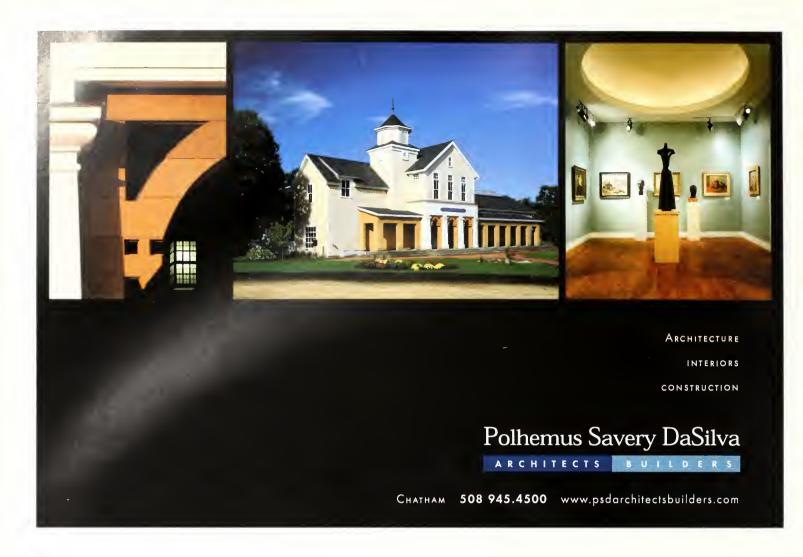


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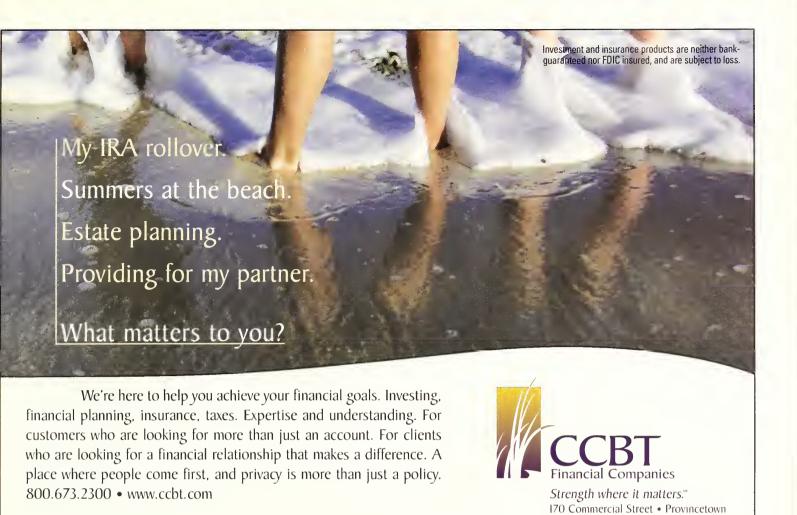
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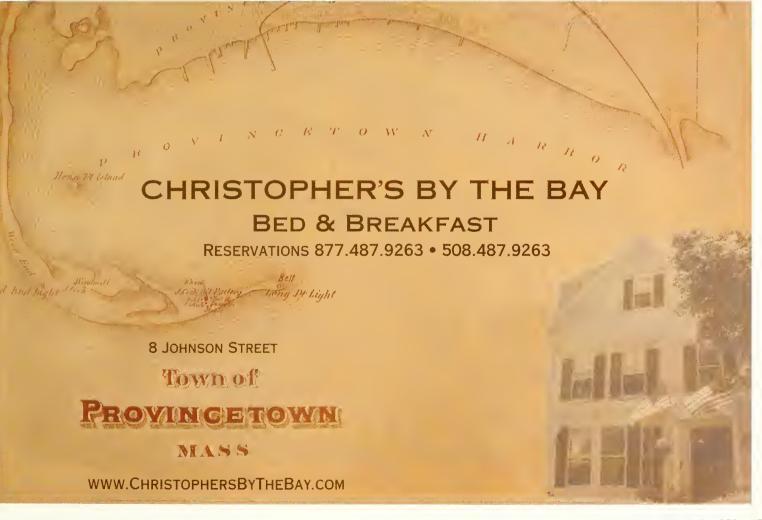


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- 16-19 Cabaretfest
- 18-20 Monumental Yard Sale

JUNE

- 8 By the Sea Bike Trek
- 13-16 Provincetown International Film Festival
- 14-16 275th Provincetown Birthday Weekend Celebration
 - 15 Tennis for Life

JULY

- 4 Fourth Of July Parade, Fireworks & Parties
- 13-20 Provincetown Summer Bear Week

RUGUS1

- 19-25 CARNIVAL WEEK: "Around the World in 7 Days"
- 30-31 PASG 16th Annual Auctions

SEPTEMBER

- 7 Swim for Life & Paddler Flotilla
- 19-29 Fall Arts Festival
 - 21 Connecticut Gay Men's Chorus

OCTOBER

- 4-6 Mates VI Leather Weekend
- 14-20 18th Annual Women's Week
- 25-27 Provincetown Round-Up Weekend

NOVEMBER

- 1-3 Halloween Weekend
- 7-10 Annual Single Men's Weekend
- 28-30 Thanksgiving Weekend Holiday Kick-Off

DECEMBER

HolidayFest 2002 — a month long celebration with plays, music, carolers and more!

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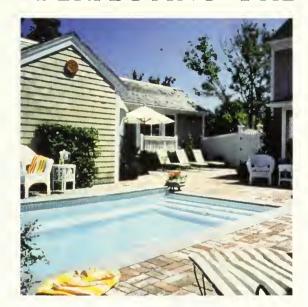
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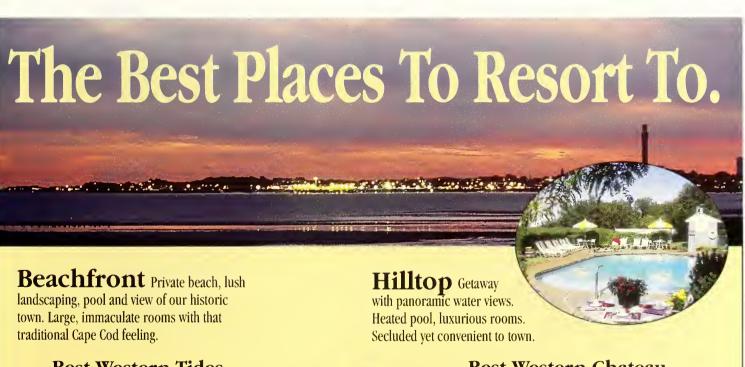


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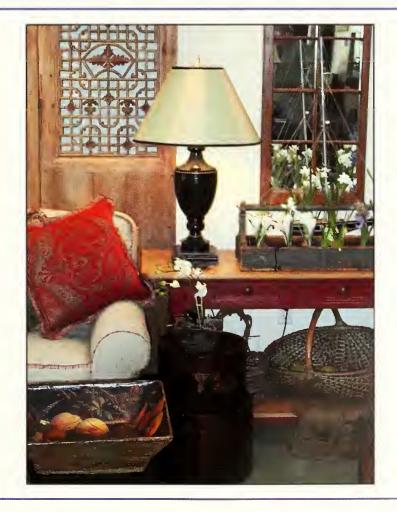
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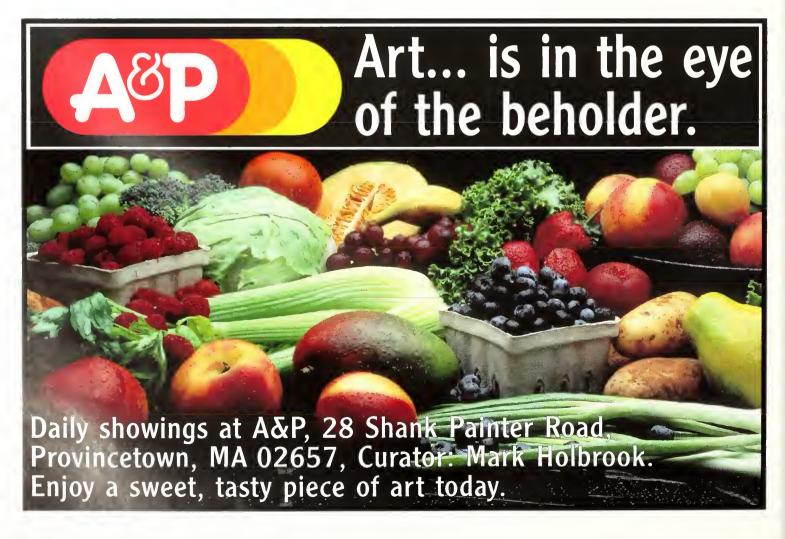
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1995	PUSHCART PRIZE XX: BEST OF THE SMALL PRESSES
1994	American Literary Magazine Awards: First Place for Editorial Content
1994	EDITOR'S CHOICE IV: ESSAYS FROM THE U.S. SMALL PRESS 1978-92
1994	NOTABLE ESSAYS OF 1993
1993	American Literary Magazine Awards: First Place for Editorial Content
1993	Best American Poetry
1993	PUSHCART PRIZE XVIII: BEST OF THE SMALL PRESSES
1992	American Literary Magazine Awards: First Place for Editorial Content & Design
1991	Best American Poetry
1991	NOTABLE ESSAYS OF 1990
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Published annually in mid-summer since 1985, *Provincetown Arts* focuses broadly on artists, performers, and writers who inhabit or visit the tip of Cape Cod, and seeks to stimulate creative activity and enhance public awareness of the cultural life of the nation's oldest continuous art colony. Drawing upon a century-long tradition rich in art, theater, and writing, *Provincetown Arts* publishes essays, fiction, interviews, journals, performance pieces, poetry, profiles, reporting, reviews, and visual features, with a view toward demonstrating that a community of artists, functioning outside the urban centers, is a utopian dream with an ongoing vitality.

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LOUISE BOURGEOIS JUNE 12 - JULY 1



SUE MILLER JULY 6 - 8 pm



GERALD STERN JULY 15 - 8 pm



STANLEY KUNITZ July 20 - 8 pm



ALAN DUGAN JULY 28 - 8 pm



WILLIAM KENNEDY August 3 - 8 pm



ROBERT PINSKY August 9 - 8 pm



ROUTET PARKE AUGUST 16 - 8 pm

Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown SUMMER 2002

JUNE

Thursday, June 13, 7 pm

Staged reading of Jaime M. Grant's screenplay, "The Passion of Alice.

Friday, June 14, 6 - 8 pm

Opening reception for Louise Bouugeois Exhibition, curated by Paul Bowen. Exhibition Dates: June 12 - July 1

Monday, June 24, 8 pm

Reading by Poet Robin Becker and slide talk with artist Joel Janowitz.

Tuesday, June 25, 8 pm

Reading by poet Rafael Campo and slide talk with artist Peter Madden

Wednesday, June 26, 8 pm

Reading by poet Marie Howe and writer Richard McCann.

Friday, June 28, 8 pm

Reading by writer Andrew Sullivan.

Saturday, June 29, 8 pm

Reading by writer Sara London, poet Michael Burkard and slide talk with artist Paul Bowen.

JULY

Monday, July 1, 8 pm

Reading by poet Mary Jo Bang and writer Elizabeth McCracken.

Tuesday, July 2, 8 pm

Reading by poet Cleopatra Mathis, slide talk with printmaker Bob Townsend, and reading by writer Heidi Jon Schmidt

Friday, July 5, 6 - 8 pm

Opening reception for Al Jaffee and Howie Schneider Exhibition. Exhibition Dates: July 3 - July 15.

Saturday, July 6, 8 pm

Reading by novelist Sue Miller.

Monday, July 8, 7 pm

University Press of New England book signing party.

Tuesday, July 9, 8 pm

Reading by writer Jane Brox, slide talk with artist Andrew Mockler, and reading with writer Frank Gaspar

Wednesday, July 10, 8 pm

Reading by poet Carl Phillips, slide talk with artist Robert Henry, and reading by writer Eileen Pollack.

Friday, July 12, 6 pm

Reading with poet Forrest Gander and slide talk with artist Grace Knowlton

Saturday, July 13, 8 pm

Reading by writer Grace Paley and slide talk with artist Michael Mazur.

Monday, July 15, 8 pm

Reading by poet Gerald Stern.

Tuesday, July 16, 8 pm

Reading by poet Joshua Weiner, slide talk with artist Bert Yarborough, and reading by poet Martha Rhodes.

Wednesday, July 17, 8 pm

Reading by poet Catherine Bowman, slide talk with photographer Marian Roth, and reading by writer Marcie Hershman.

Friday, July 19, 6 - 8 pm

Opening reception for 2002 FAWC Visual Arts Jury Exhibition: Nayland Blake, Ellen Gallagher, and Lisa Yuskavage. Exhibition Dates: July 17 - August 5.

Saturday, July 20, 8 pm

Reading by poet Stanley Kunitz

Tuesday, July 23, 8 pm

Reading by poet Alan Shapiro, slide talk with artist Sue Miller, and reading by writer Elizabeth Strout.

Wednesday, July 24, 8 pm

Reading by poet Michael Collier and writer Maria Flook.

Friday, July 26, 8 pm

Reading by poet Tom Sleigh and writer Askold Melnyczuk.

Saturday, July 27, 8 pm

Reading by playwright Paula Vogel.

Sunday, July 28, 8 pm

Reading by poet Alan Dugan, followed by an interview with Michael Silverblatt. This event is part of the Lannan Literary Series

Monday, July 29, 8 pm

Reading by writer Victoria Redel and slide talk with artist Jim Peters.

Tuesday, July 30, 8 pm

Reading by writer James Lecesne and slide talk with photographer Amy Arbus

Wednesday, July 31, 8 pm

Slide talk with artists Peik Larsen and Mary Ann O'Toole

August

Friday, August 2, 8 pm

Reading by poet Mark Doty and writer Amy Bloom.

Saturday, August 3, 8 pm

Reading by writer William Kennedy.

Monday, August 5, 8 pm

Reading by poet Liz Rosenberg and slide talk with photographer Constantine Manos.

Tuesday, August 6, 8 pm

Reading by writer Michael Klein, slide talk with artist Selina Treiff, and reading by writer

Wednesday, August 7, 8 pm

Reading by writer Dean Albarelli, slide talk with artist Marjorie Portnow, and reading with Ohio Arts Council resident Mathew Chacko.

Friday, August 9, 6 - 8 pm

Opening Reception for the FAWC 26th Annual Auction Exhibition. Exhibition dates: August 7 - August 17

Friday, August 9, 8 pm

Reading by poet Robert Pinsky.

Saturday, August 10, 8 pm

Reading by poet Gaill Mazur and poet Mark Wunderlich

Monday, August 12, 8 pm

Reading by poet Cynthia Huntington, slide talk with artist Linda Bond, and reading by writer Fred Leebron.

Tuesday, August 13, 8 pm

Reading by poet John Yau, slide talk with artist Lauren Ewing, and reading by Ohio Arts Council resident Thomas Sayers Ellis.

Wednesday, August 14, 8 pm

Reading by writer Kathryn Rhett and slide talk with artist Hanneline Røgeberg.

Friday, August 16, 8 pm

An evening with Robert Parker, author of the Spencer for Hire series; interview by Maureen Dezell following.

Saturday, August 17, 2002

Fine Arts Work Center 26th Annual Auction

6 pm: Silent Auction & Reception 8 pm: Live Auction

Monday, August 19, 8 pm

Reading by writer Michael Cunningham.

Tuesday, August 20, 8 pm

Reading by writer Paul Lisicky, slide talk with artist Michael David, and reading by writer Jacqueline Woodson.

Wednesday, August 21, 8 pm

Reading by writer Emily Heistand, slide talk with artist Sean Foley, and reading by writer Frederick Reiken.

Friday, August 23, 6 - 8 pm

Opening reception for Salvatore and Josephine Del Deo Exhibition. Exhibition Dates: August 20 - September 2.

Friday, August 23, 7 pm

"Looking at Art," a discussion with Philip Yenawine

Saturday, August 24, 8 pm

Reading by poet C. D. Wright and writer Melanie Braverman

Tuesday, August 27, 8 pm

Reading by poet Jean Valentine, slide talk with artist Gregory Amenoff, and reading by writer Pam Houston.

Wednesday, August 28, 8 pm

Reading by poet Olga Broumas, slide talk with painter Martin Mugar, and reading by writer Louise Rafkin.

Readings and slide talks take place in the Stanley Kunitz Common Room. Exhibitions and openings are held in the Hudson D. Walker Gallery. Both are located at 24 Pearl Street in Provincetown. There is a \$5 suggested donation for readings and slide talks. Contact the Fine Arts Work Center to confirm events:

508-487-9960 • info@fawc.org • www.FAWC.org











DWIN DICKINSON IN 1924

LILLIAN ORLOWSKY

JOHN CHOLY, MICHAEL LABELLE & KEITH STONE

AL OLIVEIRA AND VICTOR PACELLINI

FROM "INSIDER ART

ART

MARY ABELL, a former director of Long Point Gallery, wrote her Ph.D. on Edwin Dickinson and now is author of several essays in a new monograph, Edwin Dickinson: Dreams and Realities (Hudson Hills Press). She is one of several authors, including curator Douglas Dreishooon, the organizer of the touring retrospective that accompanies this volume, and Francis V. O'Connor whose essay analyses Dickinson's selfportraits and symbolic paintings in relation to the artist's biography, including the suicide of nis brother Burgess who jumped from the sixthfloor apartment they shared near Washington Square in New York in 1913. Dickinson the realst also explored the free-associative methods of the post-war surrealists that allowed him to reveal and conceal at once the secret subject of his major paintings. These paintings took years to resolve, but Dickinson is also known for his 'first strike" attempts in a landscape to finish a painting in less than three hours. This facility to shift between dreams and reality is the focus of the exhibit that will travel to five museums over two years, as needed for the first ample examination of Dickinson in 20 years. The highlight of the book is Mary Abell's compilation of the 'teaching points" the artist used to impress his vocabulary upon his students at the Art Students League and other venues: Unnameable Color, Color-value relationships, Striking the Note, Premising the Color-Spots, Working Large and Taking Only a Section of the Figure, Angular Perspective Based on Deviation from the Plumb Line, and the Squint, where, by squinting or reducing the composition to its elements, the color masses, the lights and darks, and the vertical spine, the initial drawing is established in about five minutes.

ACME FINE ART opened in Boston last fall, infusing Newbury Street with many artists associated with the Lower Cape, including Robert Beauchamp, Lillian Orlowsky, and Tony Vevers who will have a solo show next season.

CAHOON MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART was the venue for a 30-year retrospective of Peter Coes, curated by Cindy Nickerson, director of the museum. Coes lived in Provincetown for 20 years before relocating to Cummaquid. Coes delights, as we do, in fine his architectural rendering of

Cape houses, each shingle having its own highlight, each patch of porch trim having its own curls of pealing paint, bathed in an ethereal blue light, the twilight the French call the "hour of the wolf," a time when color vision fades and black and white begins to look like tinted duotones. Occasionally, with aching poignancy, Coes does portraits of adolescent girls on the verge of adulthood, saying bittersweet good-byes in September. The season of autumn suffuses the work, a perpetual mood of winning by losing, where excitement replaces sadness.

CAPE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS hired a new director this spring, Donald Knaub, a veteran curator and administrator of university-based art collections. A native of York, Pennsylvania, Knaub grew up in a devoutly religious community in York, Pennsylvania-the Amish-related Church of the Brethren-which distinctly disavowed art and artists. How he found his way into the art world remains a mystery, even to him. A future exhibition he would like to mount would examine the role of the Portuguese in the art community of Provincetown.

CASTLE HILL's distinguished Artists and Writers Chair is occupied this year by Joel Meyerowitz in recognition of his ongoing project at Ground Zero, where he is producing a photographic archive for the Museum of the City of New York. For years he saw the Towers daily from his studio in Chelsea. Shortly after the catastrophe, when he first engaged himself with the site, he said that he was determined to photograph everything: "First, the Towers and their astonishing remains, but also the streets, signs, lampposts, trees, parks, stores, interiors, subways, and the vast underground spaces. Also the workers and machinery, day and night." The State Department is mounting a series of 27 exhibitions that will travel the world, with Meyerowitz as cultural ambassador. His lecture is August 10. Also in August, a workshop led by Christina Schlesinger will focus on the power of the public mural to galvanize a community. In the early '70s Schlesinger was a director of the Los Angeles Citywide Mural Project. Since then she has used the blank walls of bus stations and factories to tell stories about the people who live around the site.

CHOLY GALLERY opened this year in the

West End space formerly occupied by Breakpoint Gallery, which in turn has moved to the Commons in the middle of town. The effervescent John Choly is famous for painting hearts in all shapes and sizes: "Every heart is a love offering. No matter what, I will always paint hearts."

DeCORDOVA MUSEUM hosted an exhibition for Robert Ferrandini, the quintessential Boston artist who was disabled with a massive stroke last year. At a ceremony, "Dinner with Bob," Mary Behrens spoke of her long friendship with the artist: "Black wavy hair, glasses, beautiful shirt, frowning, sipping a Coke, an Italian Bob Dylan, sharp, bookish, and wired. Never have I known anyone so intensely engaged by the world around him-nervous, high-strung, yet simply the coolest guy in the room." In a memorial for September 11, Necee Regis' "Flight Patterns" is installed from June to January in the Grand Staircase. Based on commercial jet planes, 25 panels are arranged in a pattern on the wall from top to bottom, the patterns referencing navigation routes as well as the migration patterns of birds.

DNA GALLERY artists Bob Bailey, Richard Baker, James Balla, Paul Bowen, Breon Dunigan, Vico Fabbris, Thomas W. McCanna, Janice Redman, Duane Slick, and Frank Yarmus were included in "Ten Artists from Provincetown" at the Gregory Lind Gallery in San Francisco. "Provincetown is one of the foundations of American art in the 20th century," the curator wrote. "Today I have become devoted to this special place and am pleased to draw from the Cape for this show on the West Coast."

ELLEN ELIZABETH GALLERY in Harwichport had a show of work made by prisoners from matchsticks, popcycle sticks, cigarette packs, plastic cups and foil, paper towels, and other specific materials available to those on the inside. Thus the title of the show, "Insider Art."

CHARLES FIELDS's new book of photographs of Provincetown's people and places gives a glimpse of our privileged glory in living in this town of theater. Our favorite is the portrait of Al Oliveira and Victor Pacellini waving like victorious generals during a Veteran's Day parade. Oliveira served in the famous 101st Airborne Division that invaded Normandy, liberated Hol-









CHARLES KAESELAU'S MURAL, "BATTLE AT THE BRIDGE," 1941

land, and received a Presidential citation as a unit for valor at the Battle of Bastogne. In the photograph, his helmet gleams in the sun. The soldier told me privately that he had polished his helmet with wax, adding that only generals were allowed to polish their helmets for parades.

JOHN GRILLO was honored with a surprise bash this spring for the opening of Café Heaven, the high-ceiling restaurant whose huge walls are filled with the high-toned canvases of the artist. His circus fat lady floats like a blushing balloon, smiling on those eaters of French toast who worry about their weight. Grillo, represented by Cove Gallery in Wellfleet, is also a terrific cook, like many artists. His paintings hang also at Angel Foods, across from the Art Association, so if you associate Grillo with delicious food, you are not crazy.

BILL EVAUL's show of white-line woodcuts inaugurates Truro's new COA Gallery. When Evaul first came to Provincetown on a magazine assignment to write about printmaking in Provincetown, he went straight to Myron Stout, who told him about Ada Gilmore and Blanche Lazzell and made him consider the idea of the white line. If you haven't seen Evaul on the streets lately, it's because he's been working on poster commissions for the Arts Foundation of Cape Code, WOMR, and the Pavomet Performing Arts Center in Truro. He plays music to relax, preferring the bass because he can make the other guys look good.

HELEN HARRISON and Constance Denne are authors of Hamptons Bohemia: Two Centuries of Artists and Writers on the Beach, with a foreword by Edward Albee. This book tells us how they bury their dead artists in East Hampton, a model for comparing how we on the Lower Cape respect the artists that matter to us. In 1956 Lee Krasner chose Green River Cemetery as the place to bury her husband, Jackson Pollock. The couple lived about a mile away and Pollock many times, on walks, expressed to Krasner a desire to be buried there. Harrison writes, "For a man estranged from his Western roots, ill at ease in the art world, but relaxed and comfortable with the natives of his adopted community, Green River was perhaps the only place Pollock might truly rest in peace. The story goes that when de Koon-

ing lived across from Green River in the late '50s, he would scan the graveyard from his window each morning to reassure himself that Pollock, his one-time rival, was still under the huge boulder that serves as his tombstone."

BILL HAYWARD's new book of photographic portraits, Bad Behavior (Rizzoli) features quite a number of past and present habitues of Provincetown, including Mary Doty, Marie Howe, Michael Klein, Michael Cunningham, Paul Bowen, James Lecesne, Eileen Myles, Karin Cook, Gerald Stern, Jason Shinder, Paul Stopforth, Victoria Redel, AJ Verdelle, John Kelly, and Ricky Jan Gordon. In extending the idea of the subject's cooperation in his or her own portrait, Hayward invited each subject to personalize the neutral background in his studio. Suspended overhead was a wide roll of paper ready for writing or drawing, scissors, brush, and paint, according to the impulse of each particular actor, artist, dancer, writer, or musician.

KNOEDLER GALLERY in New York paid magnificent homage to a trio of artists who were aware of each other's work for many years, finally culminating in a few summers in Provincetown in the late '50s and early '60s, where they made some of the best pictures of their lives, each speaking to the other. Coming to Light: Avery, Gottlieb, Rothko: Provincetown Summers 1957-61 opened in May and runs to mid-August. The show is curated by E.A Carmean, Jr., who provides an elegant "critical fortune" detailing chronologically the interactions of the three artists. He considers not only in the period of the exhibition focus, but the whereabouts of earlier contacts, precedents for understanding the Provincetown summers. Carmean records how the artists are mutually assessed at intervals by key critics: "From one point of view, Rothko's painting is an abstraction of Avery's." When Avery died in 1965, Rothko said in his eulogy, "I cannot tell you what it meant for us during those early years to be made welcome in those memorable studios. The walls were always covered with an endless and changing array of poetry and light."

CHARLES KAESELAU, former president of the Art Association, painted a mural for the WPA in 1941 for the Concord Post Office while in Provincetown. It is an artist's vision of the battle that started the Revolutionary War, depicting Major Buttrick ordering his men not to fire until they see the whites of the enemies' eyes. The mural was painted on a long canvas in Provincetown and affixed to the Concord wall with lead paint. When the mural was installed, there was no mention of the artist. Recently the mystery was solved and a ceremony was held this April to dedicate a plaque to the artist.

JULIE LESVESQUE, winner of the annual National Competition, installed a major work in a large gallery at the Museum, consisting of a white replication of a one-room schoolhouse. All the desks and chairs are present, though some sag from over-stuffed shelves, some seem collapsing with legs splayed, some perfectly rectangular and rigid. All white. The blackboard is white. The hidden light illuminates the room in blinding white. All the furniture was handmade by the artist and coated with salt, reminding her of the isolation she felt in a classroom in her youth. The installation pays homage to the sacred prison, coated with bitter nostalgia, where we learned our ABC's and a few other things we'll never forget.

MASSACHUSETTS CULTURAL COUNCIL artist grants program awarded \$12,500 to four Provincetown artists: Pat de Groot, Jenny Ding, Frank Egloff, and Jim Peters. Barry Hazard's largescale portraits won a cash award as a "finalist." In poetry, the MCC awarded the big checks to Sheila McGuinness, Lynn Stanley, and Mark Wunderlich, our poetry editor for this issue.

WILFRID J. MICHAUD, JR., an attorney and patron of the arts, including the Art Association and Provincetown Arts, died of cancer in April. The disease deformed him, changing his body in a way he abhorred but said nothing about. His partner of 15 years, Stephen Borkowski, told us that "Will adapted to each stage, just enjoying the sun, the music, pizza, yard sales, bingo, and listening to the sound of birds outside his window in the morning. Did you know I lost him to cancer this week? He admitted he just could not fight it anymore and slipped away while in my arms with us sleeping like spoons."

PAUL RESIKA usually waits a year or so before he shows a new crop of pictures. He wants to make sure he still likes them after he has lived



VILFRED MICHAUD, JR. WITH TEPHEN BORKOWSKI



PORTRAIT OF KARIN COOK FROM BILL HAYWARD'S BAD BEHAVIOR



PORTRAIT BY NORMA HOLT



STANLEY KUNITZ SCULPTURE BY HOWIE SCHNEIDER, 2002



ANNEMARIE HEINRICH, 1943,

vith them and has begun a new series. When we risited his Upper West Side studio this winter, he vas working on paintings that utilized a geonetric prism, seemingly as a metaphor for dividng light into various colors. He went to the hop of the Museum of Natural History and ourchased a small Plexiglas prism, which did not nchant him, though it sat like a paperweight on new drawing he'd done of a Signac painting of sailboat on the Seine. The sail shape became Resika's prism that was beginning to appear in nis new paintings featuring fish, an egg, the noon, and mostly ultramarine blue grounds, so nis symbols, stylized so that they are a few steps emoved from the real thing, suggest the cosmic hapes of constellations. Resika's daughter told ner father that she thought one particular fish vas "vulgar," too realistic, and Resika was pemused and charmed, taking his sweet time to hink about the remark.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD, the Long Point gallery collagist who, upon her death, created a oundation for deceased artists, deemed outtanding, who are yet under-recognized. Among rantees this year is Douglas Huebler, the coneptual artist who conceived many of his big deas in tiny Truro. The grant will fund an exhipition and catalogue in London, Huebler's first ince he died in 1997. Rothschild herself was the subject of a small, elegant retrospective at Knoedler, curated by Karen Wilkin, who wrote hat the artist's painting achieve their vitality by the tension between what seems to have been a lesire for intense expression and a conviction hat expressiveness must be a distillation from observation, rather than the result of unbridled nvention." Rothschild's early work echoed spects of Karl Knaths, the Provincetown abstractionist, who utilized strong boundaries petween his shapes. Wilkin observes, "In the nost daring of her early gouaches, line ceases to be principally a boundary or a defining limit of color planes and begins to function more independently, anticipating the more important role of cursive, rhythmic "drawing," achieved in a variety of ways in the relief paintings she made in the last two decades of her life."

SCHOOLHOUSE CENTER for Art and Design: Highlights this season for Driskel Vintage Photography include work by Annemarie Heinrich, Thomas Eakins, Rowland Scheman, Weegee, Sid Grossman, Minor White, Baron Von Gloeden, James Bidgood, Allen Ginsberg, Lisette Model, and special collections of vintage radiographs and photograms, 19th-century cloud studies, vintage jazz photographs, and a Jayne Mansfield memorabilia show. Drisel Contemporary presents new work by George Perkins, Paul Goldberg, Deidre Portnoy, William Hamlin, Marie Cosindas, Michael Stutz, Henny Garfunkel, Cy Fried, Eliot Hundley, and Jeff Burton.

HOWIE SCHNEIDER, author of Unshucked: A Cartoon Collection about the Cape, the Country, and Life Itself, is an artist keenly moved by the almost Biblical resonance in the poetry of Stanley Kunitz, especially as the poet's presence charges the way he reads his own words. Something changes as the supple rhythm of his precise words echo in his ancient consciousness. He loses the pleasant twinkle in his eye, becoming aggressive, aloof, lifting upward in the frail lightness of his advanced age, seeming to jerk like a leaf in the wind. His head thrusts hard, heavenward, then is pounded by a puff of passionate breath. Schneider wanted to capture the performing poet, with Kunitz as devoted medium for knowledge about common humanity. Kunitz posed twice for Schneider while he modeled his mound of clay. The flattered poet presented his pleasant twinkle, glowing with inner happiness from Schneider's genuine respect, and the sculptor saw the smile of self-consciousness on the poet's visage. That posed look would not do. Schneider wanted the glimpse that showed the spirit and not the body, what the Germans call Vergesistigt when they speak of a person with inward motion and outward calm. Schneider worked the clay over the winter months in his studio, getting lost in the effort, and finally giving up, knowing he had failed. That loss freed him. He began ripping and throwing the clay with abandon until the Kunitz he sought stared back at him, alive with the gift of his presence. "That's it!" Schneider said.

T.J. WALTON opens in a new space this year in the West End. This fall she will have her first one-woman show in Boston at Kidder-Smith on Newbury Street. Her paintings evolve the way a writer writes, one sentence at a time, with the sentence answering the previous; "every stroke," she says, "is about the last one, the way someone walking stays balanced."

WRITING

INDIRA GANESAN'S name comes from India and is derived from "Ganesha," remover of obstacles, elephant-headed, Scribe of the Mahabharata. She arrived in America at age five and grew up on Long Island. At the airport on her way to a job interview in California, she was asked, "Where are you from?" "India," she replied, surprising herself that she was conscious of her dark skin. She reports: "September 11, I found out very late. I had classes to teach that morning, and I wondered if a I dared wear a salwar kameez, the tunic and trousers combo favored in the East, to the college. I am choosing prayer and meditation to answer my personal sorrow these days, although prayer doesn't stop the tears. I wake up in Oakland, in the heart of America, and stumble with the coffee creamer in an early morning convenience store under a freeway overpass. An older African American man in this most integrated of city uses a key to punch the container. It is Easter Sunday. I step out of the store and recognize how safe I am in this strange, foreign land where I don't know a soul. I am a citizen and have lived 36 years; for the moment, the freeway is not crumbling, cars aren't crashing, and I'm walking free."

DEWITT HENRY, founding editor of Ploughshares, knows that his magazine is so good that it should be granted protective status as a national treasure. Longevity does that, and then the editor is free to finish his own novel, kept in the drawer for so many years of devoted labor with the manuscripts of geniuses. Henry's novel is titled The Marriage of Anna Maye Potts (University of Tennessee Press). A reviewer, Ron Carter, writes: "[Henry's] first priority as a writer is to evoke a world in all its sensory detail. Indeed, every scene is so fully imagined that I expect one day to confuse the memory of having read this with the memory of actual places I have experienced. Strong writing can do that."

BARRY LEEDS, author of an early critical study of Norman Mailer, has just published a per-



LUNDAY, MAD FLIGHTS







DAN RICHTER AND AR HUR C CLARKE IN SIR ARTHUR'S HOME, SRI LANKA, 1999

JOYCE CAROL OATES

ROBERT FERRANDINI

sonal memoir of Mailer. This historically important book is akin to the 20-or-so books that were published about DH Lawrence as his life began to be turned into legend before he had expired. We think Leeds may have been more generous in remarking on Mary Dearborn's recent biography of Mailer. Dearborn loves Mailer in the manner of Camille Paglia, as an exponent of positive energy, even if Mailer is tainted, from a female point of view, by his unapologetic maleness.

ROBERT LUNDAY's first collection of poems, Mad Flights, continues its homage to voyaging, shapeshifting, and actual mode of material survival. One of the three people he dedicates his book to is his young son Dugan, named after the poet who appeared on our cover last year. In one of the book's epigraphs, Lunday quotes from the Odyssey: "For my part I shall visit Ithacal to put more courage in the son."

WILLIAM MANN, a Provincetown resident, has written a second book about how gays and lesbians shaped Hollywood between 1910 and 1969, Behind the Screen (Viking). It's an extraordinary sociological study of the politics of the film industry. When Mann began researching his book, a veteran insider leaned toward him over an outdoor lunch in Palm Springs: "This book of yours-don't repeat all that crap about how tough Rock Hudson had it. You know how he had to pretend to be straight and live a lie and all that. That was just surface. Rock Hudson had it easy. You just ask any Joe from Peoria what life was like for him. Who didn't have to lie? Who didn't have to pretend? The difference was, in Hollywood, our bosses lied for us. They protected us. We had a whole community, for God's sake. We had, dare I say it?-power. Where else in America did gays have such a thing?" Here, where Cape light surpasses Hollywood light and our bosses don't bother to lie for us.

EILEEN MYLES was featured in a new literary journal that paid penetrating homage to Provincetown, Coconino, edited by Lisa Vaas in Jamaica Plain: "Naropa was started by Allen Ginsberg and the Fine Arts Work Center by Stanley Kunitz. You're talking about different worlds of writing. Forty years ago, these guys would have had no use for each other. There's a lot of crossover right now. But Naropa's a very beat, New York School Ianguage, passionately dedicated to experimental writing. At the Work Center there is more of a writing program aesthetic, except the Work Center treats the students better."

OONA PATRICK was present at the Kennedy Library in Boston last April when it was filled with Portuguese scholars and a public attending a landmark event for Jose Saramago, winner of the 1998 Nobel Prize in Literature. Patrick reports that Saramago likes to say that "the wisest mean I ever knew could neither read nor write."

MARTHA RHODES lives two blocks north of Ground Zero. She noticed a turning point, sometime this winter, after the initial shock: "For many, life is normalizing. But the streets remain empty at night; restaurants and bars are quiet down here. I fear they'll go out of business. My friend Michael Klein took me to El Teddy's, usually a hoppin' place. Clients were asked to pay by cash instead of credit card; they had two tables of clients for dinner that night. Next door, Robert de Niro's third restaurant, Levla's, featuring Middle Eastern food, is closed; American flags are draped across the windows. Puffy's, usually packed with locals, is quiet. The National Guard and police barricades have receded to Chambers Street, as have the CIA, Bomb Squad, Secret Service. Less vans and media folks. No more boxes of Gatorade lining the street."

DAN RICHTER's long-awaited memoir of his brilliant acting role inside the skin of a gorilla in Stanley Kubrick's film 2001: A Space Odyssey will be published this fall (Carroll & Graf); foreword is by Arthur C. Clarke.

KATHY SCHORR is author of a new memoir, Provincetown: Stories from Land's End, with animating illustrations by Anne Rosen. Schorr writes sharp vignettes clustered by century, with one story from 1620, the landing date of the Mayflower, seven stories from the 18th century, 16 stories from the 19th century, and 38 stories from the 20th century. But what is old is not irrelevant; rather, these stories are formative, forming who we are now by someone who knows her history and how to make it breath. Her book may become a classic of Cape Cod literature.

THEATER

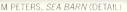
MAGGIE BARRETT's compelling onewoman play, Give It Up, will have a three-day run in August at Narrowland Arts at the Schoolhouse Center. Also in August at Narrowland, directed by Patrick Falco: the Provincetown Theater Company presents Lovers, Mothers, and Others, four original short plays by Candace Perry; Lynda Sturner's incisive short plays, Look What You Made Me Do and The Golden Slipper, and Joyce Carol Oate's dark controversial play, Homesick, with Oate's appearing in person on August 31 to lead a panel discussion following the performance. In September Narrowland presents Joe Pintauro's The Dead Boy

THOM EGAN is the new director of the Provincetown Theater Foundation, which owns a former car dealership in the East End, now being transformed into a state-of-the art playhouse, with parking for 40 cars. Groundbreaking begins this summer. Egan's background is in marketing and his clients in Boston included BankBoston and the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, for whom he managed special events. Growing up, he and his sister put on plays. He was embarrassed because he had to wear tights. So he stayed off stage and worked a child's cash register, collecting money from the parents attending their productions. He realizes now that his life has come full circle. "I'm back to what I was doing when I had my little cash register. I don't want to be on stage, but I love seeing people on stage. That's about making people look good. A psychic told me 15 years ago that I would move to a place by the water, doing something that combined all the disciplines I had learned in my life."

THE GREAT PROVINCETOWN SCHOONER RACE, scheduled for September 15, returns the thrill of sailing to our motor-clogged waters. Four classes of boats, ranging from 80 feet on deck to any sailing rig at least 25 feet on deck, will follow the race course south from Long Point to the Racing Buoy near Billingsgate Shoal, leave buoy to starboard, sail north to buoy off Wood End, leave buoy to starboard, sail east to finish line off Long Point. A town-sponsored event, chaired by John Bennett, captain of the Hindu, a half-scale model of a 19th century

3UZZbuzzbuzzbuzzbu,







JULIE LESVESQUE "WHAT REMAINS



WARREN LEFKOWICH



ROBIN HOWARD

ishing schooner that has operated as a passenger vessel out of Provincetown for over 40 years.

ROBIN HOWARD, a long-standing member of the Actor's Studio, is a mainstay of Guy Strauss' Payomet performance center in his white tent in Truro. She's a storyteller who's also worked as a folk singer, "a symbol of the talent loating around the Cape," Strauss said. Fleet Street Financial financed a brochure announcing the schedules of 14 Cape theaters, including the our-year-old Payomet. "We compete with each other; simultaneously, we draw inspiration from each other." Struss does not want to live in a tent forever. He hopes to secure Building 33 for a permanent theater, located at the Highlands Center in North Truro, the abandoned Air Force Base.

WARREN LEFKOWICH, owner of the West End Inn in Provincetown, is also a cruise ship nistorian who has traveled around the world five imes via 30 cruises. He flew to Lisbon this spring on an invitation to board a unique "condominiim ship," the World, which circumnavigates the globe continually, offering lavish accommodaions and marble everywhere. Owners of apartnents come and go at their leisure, flying to Cannes to see the film festival because that is the ime their condo is in the Mediterranean. efkowich sent us this report: "I boarded the World in Lisbon, with about 100 residencies on four of the 12 passenger decks. They consist of wo- and three-bedroom apartments (\$2.8-10 nillion each) equipped with kitchens, living ooms, and huge decks with private Jacuzzis a remarkable space ratio, the acid test of a ship. There are five restaurants. Chef Fredric, the chef aboard Ari Onasis' yacht, the Christina, runs the nost formal. There are outdoor dining options, a poolside venue, and a marina located aft with retractable docking area, allowing snorkeling, scuba, or sailing. There is a full-size tennis court and putting greens with real grass. Hundreds of niles at sea I watched the crew mow the lawn. No announcements on the PA, no captain's cocktail parties, no silly deck games. Just a floatng community at sea."

PROVINCETOWN PUBLIC LIBRARY is moving to the former Methodist Church and former Chrysler Art Museum, a fitting location for a temple of knowledge this town so deserves.

Deborah DeJonker, library director, clearly and proudly told us that "We will have a new library, but right now the building is undergoing reconstruction to make it watertight! Support has been forthcoming! We need more ways to use this great space! The very process of developing support ensures that the building will be actively used year-round by the entire community."

WELLFLEET HARBOR ACTORS THEATER, in its 18th season, presents six plays. For topical-

ity, the world premiere of James Rasheed's *Professional Skepticism* is a must-see. It takes the lay of the corporate land (that's "lay" as in "Kenneth Lay") behind the scenes of the Big-Five accounting firms: Loopy loopholes! Lax laws! Long lunches! Rasheed's skill (that's "skill" as in "Jeffrey Skilling") as a licensed CPA allowed him to write this play a year *before* the Enron scandal. Hilarious winner of the Harold and Mimi Steinberg Prize for Best Original Play.

Editor's Letter

Our theme this year concerns how writers use their sources. The example of Sebastian Junger raises issues that vitally concern visual artists, from those who depend on a study of nature to those whose source of imagery is wholly imaginary. There always is a source, whether the work is abstract or realistic, fiction or fact. Alec Wilkinson examines the formative role of a writer's mentor. One of the originators of the New Journalism, Norman Mailer, insists he is not a journalist at all. Michael Cunningham, the novelist, pictures person after person in the summer crowd on Commercial Street like a quick sketch artist doing 40 drawings in an hour. Susan Seligson takes us to Calcutta where her husband, cartoonist Howie Schneider, fell in a five-foot sewage ditch and lived to laugh about it, once his wounds healed.

Provincetown Arts is 18 this year, a fully ripe publication on the verge of becoming established. This would not have been possible but for the transforming growth of key staff. My friend and colleague of five years, Margaret Carroll-Bergman, has brought stability and wit, both essential to the survival of a small press; in doing so, she is now promoted to publisher. I am pleased to introduce Irene Lipton, our new designer. A former visual fellow at the Fine Arts Work Center, she is both an artist and an accomplished graphic designer with 15 years experience producing books for New York publishers. She brings a painter's sensibility to the magazine. I must express my gratitude to such talented and devoted partners.

There is always a source and *Provincetown Arts* has defined itself as a physical locus for the spiritual idea that individuals have the marvelous capacity to reinvent themselves.

(MRis



Sebastian

BY CHRISTOPHER BUSA

PHOTOGRAPHS BY KHRISTINE HOPKINS

I. THE LANGUAGE OF THE SEA

unger was living alone in bleak, post-season Truro, sequestered in his parents' deserted summerhouse. I had known him for only a year or so; *Provincetown Arts* was planning to publish the dramatic chapter from *The Perfect Storm* that details the unpleasant experience of drowning, informed with a coroner's knowledge of the two-step from spasm to final suffocation.

I had read the book in pre-publication galleys, sent enthusiastically to me by his publisher. Reading, I marveled at the way Junger built his sentences into paragraphs, his paragraphs into chapters, and his chapters into a story as unified as a balloon filled with water, jiggling like gelatin in your hands.

Waves make up the sea, organizing infinite molecules, via imperfect rhythms. A breeze across the surface of the water creates tiny capillary waves, which the wind then uses to get a better grip on more water. Junger's book is a monument to the huge wave that strode a thousand miles across the North Atlantic, devouring a normally seaworthy 72-foot steel fishing boat.

I sensed Junger's intuition: *language was like the sea*, a great unconscious power whose energy could be made visible by identifying with its rhythms.

II. OUTSIDE THE ART ASSOCIATION

I RAN INTO JUNGER on the street in front of the Provincetown Art Association, sometime in the winter of '96. I had just finished reading his manuscript, and I told him that it was magic. Then he told me a recent dream: he was in a bar in Gloucester, the Crow's Nest, later depicted in the book and the movie. The bar was bright and buzzing, like any good bar, lively with people having a good time. In a dark corner of the bar, standing and raising their drinks, huddled around a tiny, tall, circular table, seven of the fishermen who perished in the storm conferred elbow to elbow about the book in which they now were immortalized as characters. One of them muttered, "Hey, the book's pretty good," and the others nodded.

When we met recently in preparation for this article, Junger corrected me: "Actually,

in the dream I told you, it was just Bobby Shatford [the boat's captain]. And we met on a deserted beach." The difference between a deserted beach and a lively bar is the difference between fact and fiction. The author likes to wear heavy poots in winter and go barefoot in summer. Either way, he walks the line.

III. THE IDEA OF IMMANENCE

BEFORE Perfect Storm was published, Junger knew a big blow was immanent; mysteriously he knew his future had arrived and was dwelling within him. "It was a month or so before the book came out and I knew what was about to nappen. I wanted to make sure that the guy I nad gotten to know for 35 years would still be there at the end of all this. I am a solitary person. grew up as a solitary person. I realized this wave of attention was coming. I remembered I had a small mirror in my closet. I pulled it out and propped it up on my desk and sat down and just ooked at myself. Then I began a conversation vith myself: 'Get ready for what's going to happen; your life is about to get turned absolutely nside out.'" His was an effort to look into himself and see who or what was there.

He spent about an hour in conversation, a pontaneous response to his own foreknowledge. He was not sure what this meant, so he nvented out of profound need his own version of a Zen exercise or a monk's debate between self and soul. To enhance his thinking, Junger rolled cigarette; he smoked while he spoke to the visage in the mirror, trying to see who was inside he person he was looking at.

When the book came out, Junger, all of a sudden, was doing the most frightening thing he knew of, which was addressing in public large numbers of people. He remembers the first time vhen he thought he was just giving an informal alk at a museum in Peabody. He walked out and aced a hall of thousands. He is grateful that he lidn't know at the time that C-Span was filming he event for television. He adapted by learning, rial by ordeal, how to speak in public, how to present himself on TV, and how to say what he vanted to say.

He took to a specific type of journalism as if ne were born to create it. In his early 20s, he had struggled to write short stories. Reluctantly, painfully, he realized that fiction is frustrating, 'elusive." He went in circles for months on one story trying to make it perfect. Say his dream nad come true—the dream of a 25-year-old short story writer. Say the New Yorker published his perfect story. Junger saw that a week later someone else's weak story would be the rage. An avid surfer, he wondered, What was the relation of the perfect story to the perfect wave?

When he is silent, I talk about proportion and the balance of thing to thing. I am thinking of a word, reify, treasured by Lucy Grealy, the colleague of Junger's who wrote Autobiography of a Face. Reify means to make real.

Junger shrugs at my obviousness but I refuse to be embarrassed for asserting something essential. I know the word "perfect" is a loaded







term. Junger owns the word. I can only refer to the "perfect story" as a separate genre, another seaport more exotic than Junger's port of calls. The "perfect story," Junger sensed before he understood, was hardly earthshaking. It was, in fact, only weekly entertainment.

The perfect short story writer did not change the world! Nothing happened after the perfect story broke. Like a tree falling in Africa, out of earshot, certainly not seen, did the tree, in sincere honesty, actually topple? Who was the witness that can say so? The perfect short story writer petered out like a spent wave splashing onto thirsty sand. The invented story was so elusive, it had no resonance; therefore the invented story could not be perfect.

IV. CHAINSAW

JUNGER was living in Boston, waiting tables in Harvard Square at a stylish bistro, Casablanca, and working as a climber for tree companies, trimming limbs from ancient oaks and elms. After trimming trees, it was a breeze to serve Manhattans.

Junger met a woman and moved to a cozy love shack beside the water in Gloucester.

"Cozy love shack!" Junger objects sharply, demanding accuracy. "Well, it was a fisherman's house with busted-up boats and dead cars in the

Though he had never lived with a woman before, everything somehow was very nice. Except that Junger was beating his head against the wall trying to write short stories, even as he was starting to find satisfaction in doing a little more journalism. Breaking up with his girlfriend was an "upsetting episode," as he described it, speaking as a gentleman who could plausibly be called "Mr. Determination," if this were some sort of a merely fabricated story. Junger, in truth, was cut deeply by the break-up, and the episode forced him to move far away to Truro. Here was a world elsewhere, not Thoreau's quaint Walden, but Junger's contemporary version. The dune shack replaced the log cabin, a questionable improvement. Junger could see that the smallest ocean waves were big enough to leap over the frogs that lurked at the edge of the pond.

"It was a place I'd always been fond of. Any kid who comes to the Cape in the summer and has to go back to Boston at the end of August knows this. I said, Wow, I could be down here in the off-season, in the winter. I didn't have to leave. Shitit was great! I started hanging out in P'town, just because in January that's where the humans are. I met Don Beal. I knew Gordon Peabody a little. I shot pool at the Bradford with some of the new writers in residence at the Work Center, like Matt Klam, Lucy Grealy, and Elizabeth McCrackin. In fact, that was the year that the Work Center fellows appeared on the cover of Provincetown Arts, standing on the sand dune, in the spring of '93."

Junger was brought up on the Cape where artists and their kin have lived for generations. Co-existing like cartilage in the backbone of the community, these people live year-round on the

the peninsula, where even the Mians only ventured out for the unths when it was warm and where 115h were especially succulent. Summer ape is a social celebration, but the harsh drives most everyone away. A few strays sustained by an entrenched faith in the wherent value of pursuing some art, insisting against normal odds on the primacy of their own integrity of feeling. Here Junger realized that the most beautiful short story in the world has a negligible impact compared to a mediocre article in the New York Times. The knowledge devastated him. He sensed the power of journalism as a mode, not of contemplation, but of action.

His life may be said to have begun at age 30 when he cut his leg with a chainsaw. Instead of cutting the limb of a tree 60 feet from the ground, he cut his own limb. Out of the wound was born the idea of writing about dangerous work. Recuperating, he started to write about a surfing incident off Balston Beach in Truro in the winter of '94. Surfing in the surge along the shore, he wiped out, lost his board, and almost drowned, giving him personal knowledge of the medical details of drowning-how the larvnx, the organ of speech that thrives in air, shuts down in spasm underwater in order to prevent flooding of the lungs.

V. WRITING CAREER

JUNGER WANTED TO SALVAGE his writing career because it wasn't going anywhere. Without a magazine assignment, he flew himself out west to a raging fire in the steep hills near Flicker Creek in Idaho and started hanging out with fire crews. He intended to write a book about six or seven different dangerous jobs, including fighting forest fires, commercial fishing in the North Atlantic, and the old-time harpooning of humpback whales practiced by "the last living harpooner" on a small island in the southern Caribbean. He made these early trips on his "own dime," without encouragement or support, because he knew each idea was right for him. Some of his early pieces were published in Outside and Adventure, men's magazines that nurtured stories of extreme stress and spread the genre among the general reading public. Here is where Junger began to make distinctions between sports and war, national necessity and personal quest. Men's Journal bought Junger's first national magazine piece and years later sent him to Afghanistan to profile Ahmed Shah Massoud, the quixotic soldier/statesman who became the man Junger, maybe, most respects, after his father. Junger wrote a book proposal and a 50-page chapter on the Andrea Gail for what became Perfect Storm. Then he took more money out of the bank and flew to Bosnia because another chapter was going to be about war correspondents.

Researching the job of being a war corresponupnt would teach him a useful skill. If he couldn't Let the book published, he could become a war correspondent. "Going to Bosnia served a double purpose. I spent five months there. This was my







first exposure to being a war reporter, such as it was. I had no idea what I was doing, but I loved what I experienced. All that was familiar broke away. In Sarajevo I started hanging out with a couple of other journalists, a Dutch guy and a Belgian guy."

He met Reza, the Belgian guy, a photographer, in Afghanistan in 2000. The Dutch guy was a journalist Junger met in an elevator in Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, hitting it off instantly. Reza, who was a little more experienced, said, "Listen, I know you don't know what you're doing. I'm going into Sarajevo. Why don't you come with me?" Reza taught Junger, "a total amateur," by his own admission, how to file radio reports and write newspaper articles for ABC, Associated Press, and other networks. Intoxicated by what he was doing, he learned fast, urged on by a reinforcing desire to do a kind of writing that was itself a dangerous job. This was when he got a fax from his agent in New York, Stuart Krichevsky. He said, "Remember the book proposal about the storm. Well, I just sold it." Krichevsky asked Junger to come at once to New York. Junger obeyed the call, signed the contract, then locked himself in his parents' summerhouse, spending two winters writing Perfect Storm. By that time he knew many people in Provincetown. He felt it was his kind of place, but he was afraid of becoming complacent, worrying darkly, "You know, you can get pretty comfortable down here."

Doing foreign reporting, before Perfect Storm was published in 1997, keenly deepened Junger's sense of mission. He was in Bosnia in '94, three years before the book came out. The first time he was in Kosovo was in '98, and again in '99. He went to Sierra Leone in 2000 and to Afghanistan in 2000 and '01. Now he looked into the mirror of himself and said, "OK, you've been to a screwed-up country. Now you are back in a wealthy, protected country. There is something you need to say about the state of the world that Americans need to hear." Clear purpose became the courage that calmed his nervousness. He stayed conscious that the calm was not there when he needed it. Only after he returned from the speaking tour of Fire, the collection of magazine pieces that superceded his bestseller, did he become the guy who wrote them.

VI. BLUE PASTURES

JUNGER thinks visually. His mother is a landscape artist who exchanged the green pastures of Ohio for the blue pastures of Cape Cod; his father is an acoustic engineer who devises ways to reduce noise levels in everything from NASA moon launches to submarines to gymnasiums. Sound underwater is always magnified. If Junger's father chose to dampen noise, the son chose to respond to its rhythms.

When Junger writes his outlines he makes use of arrows and boxes to plot out how he might present his material to people. Many of the books he consults on meteorology or the mechanism of firing a bullet are riddled with clear diagrams, graphic statements of a process more powerful than our ability to stop anybody from

pulling a trigger. On assignment Junger makes notes part of the day, tape-recording interviews or not, depending on the kind of interview he does. He will fill up four or five stenographer's books on an assignment, keeping the tape recorder going as a back up. During a conversation, Junger takes the best notes he can. He knows they are imperfect, but his notes outline his interest, providing an inventory or a table of contents. Later, when he puts the piece together, the notes vividly show where he has been. He will pick quotes, then go back to the machine to get the exact wording. "A quote is a sacred thing," he believes. "There should not be a comma missing. If you put something people said in quotation marks in an article or in a book that means those exact words were said. That to me is journalism."

Of course there are things the journalist can't say. They can say a little, but not too much, about whom they are, in order to explain how they came by their report. At the bottom the question we are asking is how writers get their material, and how faithful their stories are to their sources. In matters of truth, nonfiction may supercede fiction. To keep a reader's attention, fiction may have to be 10 times better than nonfiction. Junger, alert to a false moment in writing, will succumb to the first temptation to put a novel down, stopping to read on the slightest excuse. He believes that a bad moment in writing, perhaps asserting something not substantiated, or claiming a feeling not demonstrated, will lose the reader's confidence. Like a fatal blunder in chess, the game will end. In nonfiction he allows that the writing can be a little flawed because the topic might be interesting. "But if I come across a novel that's really great," he insists, "there's nothing better than that."

The history of literature shows that culture does not want the writer to make up the story. Homer's audience wanted to know what happened during the Trojan War. Beowulf declares, "Often Fate saves an undoomed man, if his courage is good," meaning that a man's effort can prevail if his end is not foretold. Chaucer told tales in Middle English about the priests and nuns that make us blush today. Milton let Satan speak more eloquently than God. Shakespeare shamelessly took his history plays from detailed chronicles. Blake's wife put an empty dinner plate before her husband, reminding him not to live by visions alone. Conrad, Hemingway, Steinbeck, and other 20th-century writers produced touchstone fictions drawing upon actual life. Every writer feels an obligation to transmute the material of true existence in some way, but Junger seems to have taken naturally, like a duck to water, to the practice of reporting.

Stanley Kunitz wrote a poem I admire among all others, "King of the River," about salmon swimming upstream to spawn. The involuntary feeling is delivered against a cascade of conditionals. The rhythms of the poem are a series of rapids that oppose the drive of the fish. The fish could die from a hook in its gill, with the triumphant fisherman reeling in a yard of muscle in mortal agony. But Kunitz's fish dies with the dignity of knowing, as the poet says, that the

I remembered I had a small mirror in my closet. I pulled it out and propped it up on my desk and sat down and began a conversation with myself.

water is not clear, the water is not still, that knowledge is not given to the fish, that the power is not granted them to break out of their cells, that their powers are not pure enough, and therefore this fish is not immortal. If, if, if is echoed by no, no, no. Yet the drive of the salmon drives the newspaper report that drives the poet. Kunitz wrote his poem after reading a New York Times article on the life cycle of the Pacific salmon. These factual reports easily attach themselves to entrenched, powerful metaphors that take you for a ride. The writer yields, respecting the medium's source of power. Maybe someday Junger will write a terrific novel.

VII. SHORT FORMS

RIGHT NOW he is exploring tension in short forms, varying the degree of his presence as a reporter, which boils down to his use of the word "I." In "Escape from Kashmir" (1996), Junger took us through a series of harrowing decisions, first to escape, then to survive in the open terrain in winter in the countryside of Kashmir, one man against the elements. That man is not Junger, but it reads as if it were. Junger locates instances of intense personal struggle that are complicated by history, something greater than the individual. Yet when these individuals speak, their words are weighted with the history they embody. Junger builds tension incrementally, bit by bit, adjusting the balance to more finely define the differences being weighed. Practically wary of the ugliness of pretension, Junger simply avoids an approach to writing as a self-conscious activity. He knows he does not possess the final secret and he is grateful to pursue the fruitful leads of the locals in an area, painfully aware that their names may never appear in his articles.

Junger describes himself as a "loner." Something happens in a room when he is writing that gives him a result he is satisfied to accept. His pieces aspire to being full and complete statements, to being, in short, literature. This aspiration must be the source of his early desire to write fiction. Perhaps unconsciously, when he ceased writing fiction, he ceased to focus on people in his writing. He pointedly avoided detailed profiles of people, choosing instead to chart the drama of natural and social phenomena that

dominate individuals. He saw the individual, like a tank or a helicopter, as a vehicle in a larger event. The larger event was the engine of individual will. The individual becomes identified with a social mission. His smoke jumpers, longliners, spear-throwers, code breakers, translators, forecasters, bonesetters, midwives, and telegraph crews, some of whom he has never written about, however much I wish he had, are specialistsexpert witnesses to intense trauma. There at this point, their "I" becomes plural in a weird way because they speak for the physiological processes of all people. Junger doesn't use a lot of pronouns enacting arguments between people.

VIII. PRONOUNS

THE AUTHOR AGREES to meet me in my office and talk turkey. If we were ducks, we would speak ducktalk, the language of ducks. We are not ducks.

Though he had never been to my house, I respectfully invited him in the period when Storm broke. Absent then, now he arrived with a lit cigar, not too big, asking if he could smoke in my house.

"Seb," I said, "are we not fellow Beachcombers, those local ruffians who are the poor relation of the artist?"

Junger entered, knowing my tendency toward obscurity. He was modest and arrogant at once, but he soon forgot about smoking and began to look at the paintings on my walls. He fastened on the great photograph of the bearded clam warden, the early ancestor of Frank Gaspar, author of the only novel, Leaving Pico, written by a Portuguese son of the community. John Gregory, who recorded the subtle gray tones of P'town before color photography, took this male Mono Lisa. He is the mother of the good time when life made us new.

Renaissance, we know, or knew, means "new birth." Dante wrote a poem about it. Junger studied the duo-tones of the bearded clam warden hanging like a fish skeleton on my wall. The author saw that the gray tones were so subtle, the bum looked like an aristocrat. Junger is astonished by photography. Here the other guy looks like himself.

So I must ask him, "Would you prefer to profile a wall of fire than a line of beauty queens?"

Before answering we both trek upstairs, sit at my desk, his right elbow to my left elbow. Neither of us thinks to challenge the other to an armwrestling contest. The chessboard sits on a stool beside us. If we get bored, we can play chess.

Seb asks for one of my cigarettes and taps it loudly against the table by his elbow, packing the loose, machine-rolled tobacco of my Marlboro Light 100s. Normally, when forced to think, Junger rolls his own cigarettes, a tedious ritual that keeps the sin of his smoking to a minimum.

I sit on my usual perch, an air-filled, pearl-colored exercise ball. Seb sat on one of my creaky office chairs. As a joke, I had placed the menu from his New York restaurant, The Half-King, at his elbow. If he felt hungry, he could make a call.

What brought Junger to write the essays in Fire was not the phenomenon of fire. It was the

dan emen decided to do. It was Storm: he was interested in writing grous work and commercial fishing ngerous job. But Storm is a book more meteorology, showing us how the weathnature's equivalent of human moods, fierce war, sweet as fresh cream.

The natural world impacts on people in very specific ways. "If you are reading a murder mystery," Junger reasoned, "the investigation into who killed Ms. Whomever obliges you to assemble all the facts and evidence and try and figure it out. A storm killed seven men. So you have to know how storms work. That's the force that killed the people. It could be fire, it could be the political process of a civil war in Sierra Leone. It's no different than a storm. Those are the forces that killed people.'

I follow Junger's thinking, Politics shares kinship with meteorology. The sinking of one boat can be likened to the destruction caused by the rise of Serbian nationalism.

But I reflect that when people function as a crowd, the motion of the mob converts personal power into unified action. The combined force becomes unconscious, independent, like an emotion or a newsworthy weather pattern. No one person maintains conscious control. Junger writes as if social forces share kinship with storms, winds, and waves. Indeed, he writes of fire "advancing," "reinforcing" its very self, expanding and accelerating in perfect mixtures of heat, oxygen, and fuel.

IX. SHAKY POINT

AS FAR AS JUNGER CAN TELL wars happen when a central authority collapses: "People in the United States look at chaos in Afghanistan and say, 'Why are those people so violent? Why are they killing each other?' They are killing because the parents are not home to keep order. Americans are perfectly capable of killing each other, we are perfectly capable of a civil war, or any kind of anarchic chaos as we're seeing in Afghanistan. As human beings, we are no different than Afghans or anyone else. But we have a very strong central government that keeps a lid on. In America you have people like the Michigan Militia; they are not a threat to us only because the central government is so strong. If this country were at a more shaky point in its history, as it has been and will be again, the Michigan Militia could trigger a complete fragmentation of this country. People talk about Bosnia, neighbors killing neighbors, but they forget that we were doing that in 1860."

Of course, I could assert, so directly as to be misleading, that the difference between the Michigan Militia and the Taliban is that the American tough guys are not frankly suicidal. I may believe that the Oklahoma bomber preferred to kill others and live himself.

"May not that be a form of committing sui-"He?" Junger wonders, pointing out that Tim McVeigh gave up his life for what he believed in destroying, "choosing to be put to death slowly over the course of judicial process."

X. AWE

IN TERMS OF THE AWE WAR inspires, William James said a hundred years ago that war was completely exemplary, riveting attention so well that the only solution was to find a "moral equivalent of war." The only thing as exciting as war is not innocent sport, but the ruthlessness of art, where the risk of the artist is as real as the heroism of the soldier. Junger is driven by an intuition that "all play-children's play, adult play-is a mimicry of war. Chess is. Tennis is. Football is."

Even so in courtship, I add, pointing out that birds, when they are trying to attract a mate, zoom close, invading the personal territory of their interest, then swerving away at the last moment, mockingly, pleasurably, mimicking the attack mode.

> "Knowing music was banned in these mountains. Junger pulled out his harmonica and played for about 15 minutes. Nobody shot anybody while he played."

"You could say something similar about humans." Junger pondered this basic question about the relation between love and war. "There's the initial move, then it's responded to. This sort of dialogue is not that different from war."

"One reason I write about war," he said, "is that, as a form of reporting, it is intense, demanding. I get gratification, challenging myself. War kills many more civilians than combatants. It kills a hundred times as many civilians as combatants. A couple of hundred years ago civilians were pretty much left out of combat. They suffered the change of government, but battlefield death way outnumbered the killing of civilians.

"In modern times the ratio is the opposite. For every soldier killed in war, 100 civilians die. The exact figure is horrifying. I feel this is the most serious topic you can write about. Human suffering is bad. It shouldn't happen. It does; it shouldn't. War is a primary reason. If soldiers went off and killed each other and the survivors came home, that would be the end of it, like some really bloody football games. But hundreds of thousands of innocent people are being killed when they could live.

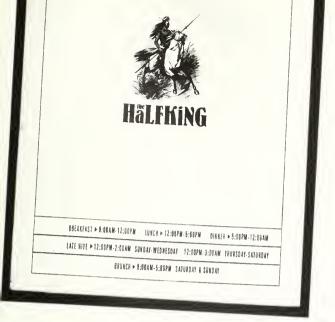
"Because I am an American and because we live in the most powerful country in the world. we are in a unique position to intervene. We have. Sometimes we do, sometimes we don't. But when we do, it works. Ending the war in Bosnia and Kosovo was a NATO action impossible without the United States. Bosnia took us a few years to get going. Kosovo we entered quite quickly and brought that tragedy to a halt, stopped it in its tracks. Afghanistan, again, took us a long time. We had our own self-interest in mind, but we stopped a civil war that killed 70-80,000 civilians in the past few years. We stopped it. As an American journalist, I feel at least the possibility, if journalists write enough about war and the root causes of war, this very powerful country we live in might be moved to act.

"Clearly repressive regimes have done awful things to their own citizens and citizens of other countries. As an American journalist I feel it is my obligation to point out to Americans, 'Look, this is the error of judgment our government is making in Guatemala, Central Asia, or elsewhere.' To do that kind of reporting includes a duty to tell Americans when our government is doing something wrong. Doing something wrong is not only wrong, it is actually making us more vulnerable to attack. Now we are not protected by our policy."

Junger reduces sophisticated policy to the point of view of the local witness involved in the heat of action. He seldom gets his directions from generals, not being in the military. He merely seeks assignments that activate his wits. He travels lightly with a sturdy flak jacket, a compass, writing material, and a wad of money stuffed inside what used to be a thin passport. Now he has been to so many countries that he has been obliged to add many pages.

The roughest country he worked in was Afghanistan, beginning with the physical realities of life there. He slept crowded in a mud-wall house with Afghan soldiers. His food was cooked over an open fire. On his first trip, lasting a month, he had one bath. The hot water came from a pot that was boiled over a fire. There wasn't much food. He lost 20 pounds. That was all right. He was prepared to deal with the experience as it went. He knew he could not set it up that much, particularly in a third-world country. He couldn't call his travel agent and say, "Book me in a hotel in the cave district of Tora Bora. He could not arrange it in advance. So he just got there. Now he is on staff at Vanity Fair and the magazine books his flights. Still, after he steps off the airplane, he's on his own. Often he works with a Dutch photographer named Teun Voeten.

Voeten is the only photographer Junger has worked with other than Reza. He met Voeten in Bosnia in '93 and they became good friends. They did their first assignment together in '96. Since then most of Junger's articles have been collaborations with Voeten. Junger's bar in New



York, where good writers and beautiful women hang out, the Half King, also functions as a gallery for good photography. These are graphic glimpses from the field. The stern photograph of Junger that appears on the back jacket of Fire was taken on location, not fabricated in a portrait studio.

XI. MINUTE OF SILENCE

ONE EVENING AFTER A DINNER last December that I attended with Junger, everybody told stories. A fire roared in a man-sized, brick fireplace. Junger explained that, having returned from assignment for National Geographic, he would proceed to share the best moment of a bad time. There the Taliban would have soon shot him, but now he was among friends. He told us about the handheld walkie-talkies of our Afghan brothers. On the mountain ridges, Junger heard static voices rattling away in Arabic. Knowing music was banned in these mountains, Junger, who loves music as much as any Beachcomber, pulled out his harmonica, playing for about 15 minutes. Junger hypnotized us with his little story. "Nobody shot anybody while I played," Junger said. After that story, we all broke for some of our own music.

Junger profiled Massoud in Afghanistan, the warrior hero who became a martyr when he was murdered by terrorists posing as journalists. This was his elegy and we heard his sorrow.

Suddenly, after the attack on the World Trade Center, Junger was one of the few journalists in America who knew enough about Afghanistan to speak with helpful understanding. He had the huge readership of Perfect Storm, almost a guaranteed audience. To boot, not many best-selling authors are interested in doing foreign reporting. Junger may be the only one, neither because he believes he is a great foreign reporter nor because he is as experienced as some of his colleagues. Stephen Kinzer, a "fabulous journalist," according to Junger, inexplicably lacks Junger's visibility. (Kinser's book on Turkey's role as a bridge between the occident and the oriental is reviewed elsewhere in this issue).

XII. PHOTOGRAPHY

PHOTOGRAPHY is very important to Junger (his sister Carlotta is a photographer, now living in England) but he likes to think that the reader can read his books and feel the pleasure of visual presence. His books are not illustrated with photographs, but future books may be.

He wants the reader to know what it looks like, feels like, to sit on a street corner in Sierra Leone and watch a rainstorm come, with the kids running around playing in the rain. He put thought into trying to elevate certain descriptions to the level of literature. He knew this effort

would not add to the information, per se. But he knew there are times in an article, especially a political article, where he could make the reader feel that he or she was actually there. He reads a lot of literature, including Foreign Policy Review, always feeling that he wants his readers to finish his articles, and knowing that his stories will always need a little more attention than the others he reads.

He wants people to read an article he wrote and to feel they've just read a short story with dramatic impact and a clean narrative arc. Junger believes that artful journalism must possess a "narrative arc: hooking people in the beginning, then lifting them with rising intention. Tricks that fiction writers use to make it an emotionally fulfilling experience, I try to use those tricks too. These are topics I care about. The better I write them, the more people will read them and care like I do. Anybody who buys the New York Times wants to be informed. Somebody, who reads a newspaper, is reading it, regardless of the quality of writing, for information. Right? Somebody who picks up Vanity Fair is not looking to find out about the civil war in Sierra Leone. As they're flipping through the pages and seeing photos of movie stars, they come to the first page of my article on Sierra Leone. I want the writing to be so good that even though they weren't looking for that information, they can't help but read the article, just because they've been seduced by the writing. While being seduced by the writing they end up finding out something I want them to know. It's almost like I'm tricking them into finding out about something that they never opened the magazine hoping to know. It might even be a topic so horrifying they don't want to know it. They read it despite themselves because the writing compels them. This is merely my aspiration; I don't know if it works or not, but this is what I'm striving for.

"The first paragraph must be good enough so they want to read the second one, and the third, and all of a sudden they've read the whole article. A newspaper reporter does not have to do that. They have a guaranteed audience just because the guy bought the paper in the first place. Vanity Fair

or any popular magazine can't count on that. People read these magazines for entertainment."

Junger knows the old story that literature, to be literature, must simultaneously delight and instruct. He respects the magic of information, but does not quite believe it can be spun to say two things at once, landing like a roulette ball exactly as needed on red or blue, east or west.

Most of his stories do not involve him and so there is no first person. The Kasmir story was one. He wasn't there. He didn't put himself in the story. "What I find," he said, "is that a light use of the first person actually ties the thing together."

XIII. A LIGHT USE?

HE EXPLAINS, "A LIGHT USE. What you don't want is to become the point of the story. The journalist is there to serve the topic. The topic isn't there as a platform for the journalist to perform a part. It's not about you, it's about Sierra Leone or Afghanistan or whatever it is. Using first person, lightly, helps the reader, helps them understand, and puts them there a little bit better, a lens that focuses their understanding. The locales I like are an incredibly alien world. So if the reader has someone over there they can identify with, namely me, another fellow Westerner, fellow American, it puts them a little deeper into the story. But you don't want to do it so much that you become the hero. God forbid that the journalist becomes the hero of the story. That to me is absolutely awful."

I myself hate novels where the struggle is simply to write the damn book, and the conclusion becomes the pile of pages in your hands. When Junger advocates for the "light" use of the first person, he makes a defining utterance. Now, he challenges, it's not a question of either/or but a *heavy/light* use of the *I* of the writer.

At a memorable workshop last fall at Robert Lifton's annual think tank at his Wellfleet retreat, Norman Mailer read a passage from the Armies of the Night, originally written in the third person, with Mailer calling himself "Mailer." In the woods of Wellfleet he read the same passage substituting the first person for the third person, I for he. The difference was astonishing. The "I" of the author was not the equal of the character of "Mailer."

When Jonathan Swift sends his reporter Gulliver to a floating island in the 18th century where certain obscure intellectuals live, he discovers that the intelligent inhabitants all have servants with beanbags attached to a stick, called "flappers," so that the servants may flap their masters when it is time to stop speaking.

They hit their masters over the head to remind them to finish their thought, so they can go to dinner. They are the locals in a strange land. Like Gulliver, the journalist who ventures to a foreign land makes himself into such an improbable conceit. He is the innocent character who does the bold traveling. He is so invisible that he could call himself by a fictional name, anything but "Sebastian," a man who has a different kind of modesty, uninterested in exposing his secondary feelings to the world. He is more interest of in the topic of his attention. His face in the nurror is not the subject of his attention. What he looks like is not how he feels.

Junger does not find himself very interesting, vet he is convinced that he has interesting things to say. He grew up in a privileged suburb of Boston. He attended Shady Hill School in Cambridge. He went off to Wesleyan University in Connecticut and majored in anthropology. Looking at the skeletons of early man, he marveled at a branch that had taken to using tools, *Homo babilis*, African guys.

When he was a sophomore in college, June believed that the captain of the *Pequoid* was interesting as the life of an actual fis. Without being quite analogous, 1 state this is why Junger refuses to write.

Others entertain him more ' writing obliges him to learn much about topics he's writing about.

Where did he come from Naturally modest, he is obliged to think "out of nowhere."

His father, Miguel, now is American. Before that he was French; before that he was German. He came to the United States in '41. Junger was born in '62. Science and art were the end points for the arc that spanned his parents' passion.

His father had a consulting firm in Cambridge, working for the Navy, for NASA, for private industry. What did his parents have to do with him? His father's mind was immensely curious; his concern was how to minimize sound, dampen it underwater, where it could travel for miles and be heard only by whales. He spoke six or seven languages.

Miguel met Ellen, his wife, in a bar in Boston in 1960. His father is seven years older than his mother

She was from Canton, Ohio, and broke from the conservative, upper-middle-class society that formed her in the Midwest. Instead of marrying at age 22 and remaining in Ohio, she went to Boston to become an artist. That ambition made her an outcast. She was the first person that she knew who had seen the ocean. In her town she didn't know anyone who had seen the ocean. His mother spent her 20s learning and dreaming, like her son, studying, in her case with Henry Hensche, the acolyte of Charles Hawthorne, founder of impressionism on Cape Cod. Later the author's mother began to exhibit professionally in Boston. She didn't marry until 30, "an outrageous thing in the 1950s," Junger says.

Like his mother's quest, Junger's stories begin with a journey. He knew the story would not come to him in Truro in January while he was warming his hands in his parents' chilly summerhouse. The initial effort is merely the author's pivot, springing the story to life by going to the place where the story happens. The pace can be as slow as trudging through snow.

Ideally, Junger arrives without knowing anyone, without credentials of any kind except his impressive persona. Part of the drama is how the uithor gams his entrée. The decade of his 20s ept the aspiring author close to Boston, close to what was familiar.

He knew there was a story, but the story was elsewhere. It definitely was not where he was.

He realized, "If you can write fiction adequately, then the story is wherever you are. But I couldn't. I wasn't a good enough writer. I wasn't inspired or I hadn't lived enough. I lived in a beautiful place, a forgiving environment socially, where it is easy to get passive and a little lazy. You have to create your own obsession. If you are not driven, internally, you can float along for decades."

His model for discipline was sports training. H-was a competitive runner, very motivated and a lard worker. Training for competition means stally workouts, no matter how you feel or what the weather is. Junger entertained a delusion that, someday, he could run in the Olympics. He ran a 4:12 mile when he was 19. Throughout high school and college, Junger ran 100 miles a week, cross-country and track. After college he was sponsored by a shoe company, Etonic, (good track shoes, lousy tennis shoes) and ran marathons in New England. "I was in the hellish zone," he says with the wisdom of those who manage a rite of passage. "I was just below really good."

Yet he developed a ferocious sense of discipline. If he could run 100 miles a week for 10 years, then he could make himself do anything.

XIV. THE NECESSITY OF ONE WHITE LIE

IN *FIRE* ONE OF THE FIREFIGHTERS runs from a raging forest fire. Big fires move at an average speed of one or two miles and hour; one can walk faster. The fire that Junger recounts was moving at 18 miles an hour. Only when one firefighter, his pulse racing, drops his tools and abandons his useless equipment to run for his life, does he realize exactly what he is doing.

Junger, too, once ran for his life when he was chased by a truck-driver through deep snow in a field in France, where he lived for a while as a child.

He tells his story at the end of "Colter's Way," set two hundred years ago in an area of the country now known as Montana. John Colter was a fur trapper who ventured into territory "implacably hostile to white men ever since their first contact with Lewis and Clark several years earlier." Paddling up a river in a canoe, he was captured by 500 Blackfeet Indians. He surrendered and was stripped of his clothes. "One of the Blackfeet asked whether he was a good runner," Junger writes. "Colter had the presence of mind to say no," telling the Blackfeet a white lie, even as they toyed with him. "They told Colter he could run for his life; when they caught him, they would kill him. Naked, unarmed, given a head start of only a couple of hundred yards, Colter started to run."

After three miles he had outdistanced every Blackfoot except one. He spun around suddenly and killed the attacking Indian with his own spear. He continued running, covering 200 miles in 10 days, arriving at a military fort "with his feet in shreds." When his feet healed, the trapper returned to the territory, lured once again by the abundance of beaver. He prospered in the wilderness. Finally he married and settled on a farm in Missouri, dying two years later.

Junger writes, "Where the Blackfeet had failed,







civilization succeeded. Given the trajectory of Colter's life, one could say that the wilderness was good for him, kept him alive. It was there that he functioned at the outer limits of his abilities, a state that humans have always thrived on, 'Dangers . . . seemed to have for him a kind of fascination,' another fur trapper said of Colter. It must have been while under the effect of that fascination that Colter felt most alive, most potent. That was why he stayed in the wilderness for six straight years; that was why he kept sneaking up to Three Forks to test his skills against the Blackfeet."

At the end of the story, Junger mixes in his own early adventure, defining "adventure" as a situation in which "the outcome is not entirely within your control." He was 11 years old and skiing with a group of boys in the Alps. His mother was doing yoga in Nice. One afternoon Junger's friends had nothing to do. They discovered it was fun to throw snowballs at cars.

They were thrilled when they stopped an 18wheel truck, brakes screeching. A lone driver, huge, leaped out of the cab. Why he chose to chase Junger is a mystery that haunts the author. The bogeyman pursued the terrified boy through waist-deep snow until the man fell exhausted. Arms flailing, he cursed the kid as he disappeared into the embrace of a warm room with people talking about nothing he knew about—joy and happiness in ordinary life.

XV. WINNING BY LOSING

IT TOOK JUNGER UNTIL AGE 25 to realize that he was not going to run in the Olympics. He had based his whole identity around being a good runner. Running was a lonely thing to do; he was a dedicated loner.

Without forethought, abruptly, Junger quit his competitive running career in the middle of a workout, literally stopping, calming his pulse, then slowly walking home, one modest step after another. Here his determined gait became especially deliberate. He was in the middle of an interval workout, running 10 times 440 yards. "The routine was to do 10 repetitions of quartermile sprints, with a 100-yard jog in between, a brutal workout," he remembers. His sprints were respectably in the low 60 seconds, putting his pace at about 4:15 for the mile.

Coming off the first turn of the sixth quarter, he stopped, halted. He did not jog home.

"I walked home, knowing I was never going to compete again. Something snapped," he said, snapping his fingers with a sharp pop. "All that ferocity and dedication-I just put it into journalism."

XVI. MEASURED DOSES

JUNGER HAS LITTLE PATIENCE with writers who complain about writer's block or being unable to produce on a certain day.

That sounds self-indulgent to him. He insists that writing is no more mystical than building a house. Any carpenter knows the basics of putting a structure together, something inhabitable. You need a basic plan, then you follow what

the plan says, prepared to be amazed at the discrepancy between the map and the journey.

If Junger is at a table full of people, he doesn't tend to talk much. This rectitude is not an acquired modesty; it's his natural instinct. The more people around him, the less he says.

One on one, he can talk for hours. From the discipline of sports he learned to handle stress in measured doses. On a daily basis, he played with the edges of stress, pushing it gently, a little, resting while jogging, then pushing it a little more, a little faster. Knowing those edges, human limitations, teaches writers about the limits of human understanding.

XVII. GAIN BEYOND PAIN

"FROM RUNNING," he said, "I learned that I know how to make myself suffer."

One can say, cynically, "No pain, no gain."

But Junger had this epiphany in the first stretch of his sixth sprint; making the first turn Junger the Runner quit road racing and Junger the Journalist made his first solid steps in a direction he chose. Two people, his parents who married very late, brought him up. His mother was 30, his father 37. From his mother he learned that artistic endeavors are important, despite the constant struggle to raise a family. The struggle taught him that art was an endeavor as worthy as having a family or raising children. Particularly around here, art is elevated to a status that is on a par with any other thing a person can do. Junger failed to write the perfect short story. He failed to break the four-minute mile. He learned the discipline of daily effort, banging his head against the wall in a chilly room or his feet against the ground in any weather. "None of these things panned out. But they gave me these very valuable skills. Sports showed me how not to be afraid of losing. I learned to lose and not lose my dignity."

None of this has much bearing on Junger's love life. I hinted to him that people might be interested in this aspect of his persona.

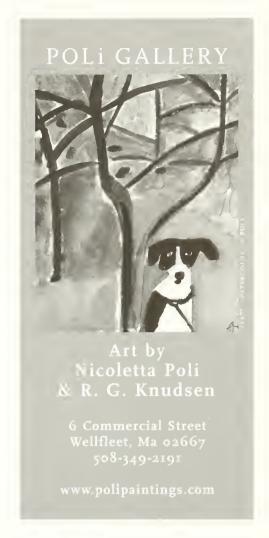
He says, "I never saw the family as the ultimate goal. I saw a struggle with how much a family impinged on having a higher pursuit."

The desire for children may be a desire to bet on your future immortality, through offspring, rather than through your artistic production. But children may not be the future so much as a continuation of the present. The future may be the present that is one's life.

I ask Junger if art gives people a chance to produce a piece of work, via a medium, that has the power to be as vital as a person.

He answers, "Yes, because there's something not negotiable about what you are trying to do.'

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Norman Mailer

Novelist or Nonfiction Writer?

BY J. MICHAEL LENNON

AM A NOVELIST."

If I asked Norman Mailer to answer my title question, there would hardly be a nanosecond of hesitation: "I am a novelist," he would say, while thumping the table for emphasis. And then incredulity would come to his face: "Can one aspire to a greater office?"

Since the beginning of his career he has believed that the novel provides ingress to history, and can, by dint of visionary style, alter it even as it records its main currents. Indeed, the novel and history seem to circle endlessly in Mailer's vision, undercutting and borrowing from each other for primacy, like rival siblings in a Eugene O'Neill play. By aspiration, his deepest identity is novelist. By achievement and accolade, it may not be, although several of his novels must be considered to be among the major achievements of the form. Sorting out aspiration and achievement in Mailer's brilliant narrative career, and unraveling-or at least loosening the knots-of the attendant generic conundrums, is a complex task. Drawing on Mailer's 50 years of commentary on the art of narrative, including several key interviews, I would like to delineate the ways in which he has been a central figure in the postwar cross-fertilization of fiction and nonfiction writing modes.

In 1959 in Advertisements for Myself he said, "I feel that the final purpose of art is to intensify, even, if necessary, to exacerbate the moral consciousness of people. In particular, I think the novel is at its best the most moral of the art forms because it's the most immediate, the most overbearing, if you will. It is the most inescapable." Twenty years later, when asked why he thought fiction was so important, he said, "Oh, because it's the place where art and philosophy and adventure finally come together . . . To me a novel is better than a reality." In 1981, he hit the same note: "My idea finally is that fiction is a noble pursuit, that ideally it profoundly changes the ways in which people perceive their experience." It would be no work to find 20 additional complementary quotes in his essays, interviews, and prefaces. Mailer is in the vanguard of American



NORMAN MAILER & MICHAEL LENNON, 1980

writers of the past half-century who have reviewed, tested, stretched, and reshaped the novel form in an attempt to capture what the great Russian theorist, M. M. Bakhtin (1895-1975) calls the "unfinalizability" of contemporary culture.

Perhaps the most pointed of Mailer's comments comes in his preface to his 1976 collection, Some Honorable Men: Political Conventions, 1960-1972. He begins with a shot at Tom Wolfe. "Ever since Tom Wolfe began to write those selfserving encomiums to the New Journalism, it has been a literary reflex to point to . . . [my] convention pieces . . . as objects of the new art, and it is possible I received more praise as a new journalist than ever as a novelist. That is an irony that tempts me to spit to the wind: I never worked as a journalist and dislike the profession." After launching a few more barbs into the hide of contemporary journalism, culminating in a comment that his own literary heritage reminded him "that the world is not supposed to be reassembled by panels of prefabricated words," he gives his novelistic credo: "It was expected of me to see the world with my own eyes and own words. See it by the warp or stance of my character. Which if it could collect into some kind of integrity might be called a style. I was enlisted then on the side of an undeclared war between those modes of perception called journalism and fiction. When it came to accuracy, I was on the side of fiction. I thought fiction

could bring us closer to the truth than journalism, which is not to say one should make up facts when writing a story about real people."

While we can quibble with Mailer's comment about never having worked as a journalist-he has written columns and/or assigned articles for a number of popular periodicals (Esquire, Playboy, The Village Voice, others)—it is true that he has never worked as a daily deadline journalist. But he is one of the leading magazinists in American literary history, up there with Poe, Crane, Fitzgerald, Oates, and Updike. His comment about receiving less praise for his novels than his nonfiction has become, however, in the quarter of a century since then, even more true. There is much less favorable comment about his novels than his nonfiction by academic critics, with a few exceptions. In the popular press, Mailer's nonfiction has been much better received. A survey of reviews in national publications, including the New York Times Book Review, Time, Newsweek, and some of the major regional newspapers-Boston Globe, Washington Post, Chicago Tribune-a total of 25 publications in all, shows that Mailer's novels have not been nearly as well-received as his other narratives. Of his 27 major books, nine are novels: The Naked and the Dead (1948), Barbary Shore (1951), The Deer Park (1955), An American Dream (1965), Why Are We in Vietnam? (1967), Ancient Evenings (1983), Tough Guys Don't Dance (1984), Harlot's Ghost (1992), and The Gospel according to the Son

(1997). In order to get a sense of the overall tenor, I rated each review of the 27 books appearing in the 25 publications from 1 to 5, negative to positive. Not every book was reviewed in every publication, but a total of 412 reviews were rated, which I concluded after some further investigation was at least 95 percent of the total possible.

Only one novel is in the top third of the list: The Naked and the Dead, which occupies the second spot. It follows his immensely successful (Pulitzer, National Book Award, best seller) first-hand narrative on the 1967 March on the Pentagon, The Armies of the Night (1968), subtitled History as a Novel; The Novel as History. The bottom third of the list of 27 contains six novels, and the middle third has two: Why Are We in Vietnam? at number 11, and Harlot's Ghost at 15. The average rating for Mailer's nine novels is 2.602. For his 10 nonfiction narratives (leaving aside the other eight-the miscellanies, a book of poems, a play, etc.), the average is 3.307. The average for all 27 of Mailer's major books is 2.947. This is the record of the literary marketplace over the last half-century. With the tremendous exception of The Naked and the Dead, which has sold over five million copies, readers have admired Mailer's non-fiction more than his fiction, and so have literary critics.

Qualifications, serious ones, immediately fickle. What is elevated today is forgotten tomorrow (when was the last time Nobel laureate John

Cruswing Lorsythe Saga was taught in an \mo niversity?), and the poor initial books such as Fitzgerald's The Great Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway seems inexplicaow. Mailer's An American Dream was poorly Mewed, although some perceptive critics rate it m one of Mailer's finest narratives. For my money, it compares favorably with Gatsby. It displays Mailer's rich, evocative style at its energetic peak, while Mailer's Hollywood novel, The Deer Park trumps Fitzgerald's The Last Tycoon. Mailer's sixth novel, Why Are We in Vietnam? is a critical favorite, more for the linguistic inventiveness of its narrator, D. J., than for its narrative line When it appeared in 1967, it seemed that Mar had retrieved the novelistic thread, at so ready to re-commence his project, annual din Advertisements for Myself, "to make a line of ion in the consciousness of our time a grand novel, one that ranked with the se of Hemingway, Dreiser, or former Posttown resident John Dos Passos, whose 19 % novel, U.S.A., Mailer has called "the most successful portrait of America in the first half of the twentieth century." Implicit in Mailer's encomium is his ambition to match U.S.A. in the second half of the century, to be the sort of major novelist, as he once said of these three writers, "who puts you through a wringer, changes your life.'

MAILER TURNED FROM THE NOVEL

But then Mailer turned from the novel. From 1968 to 1983, in an amazingly long sprint, he published 21 books. Some of these were just sparks from the wheel, of course, long essays like The Faith of Graffiti (1974), or the re-packaged columns in The Idol and the Octopus (1968), but 11 of his 27 major books came during this period, including at least one masterpiece, The Armies of the Night, and his brilliant recreations of the 1968 conventions, the Apollo II flight to the moon, and the beginnings of the Women's Liberation Movement in, respectively, Muami and the Siege of Chicago (1968), Of a Fire on the Moon (1971), and The Prisoner of Sex (1971), and in 1979, The Executioner's Song, his huge Western epic about the life and death of Gary Gilmore, which he subtitled "a true life novel." The point bears repeating, except for The Executioner's Song (which in Mailer's view is a novel), not one novel from 1967 until 1983, when Ancient Evenings, his novel of ancient Egypt, appeared.

What happened? Mailer said in 1979, "I'm not sure the Great American Novel can be done anymore. Everything's gotten so complicated, and vou have to know so much by now. I think John Dos Passos came as close as anyone with U.S.A." He continues, saying that Dos Passos's "method's fine so long as people are more the prev of social forces than the active element that changes society." His method "won't work for books where you really have to create the consciousness of terribly complicated people." In a nother interview the same year, he says that the 60s scene "was beyond our imaginations, it was more dramatic, more surrealistic, more vivid, than anything we would have dared to write

about," a notion that echoes comments by Philip Roth and Tom Wolfe. Not only was the material good, Mailer found, it was also much less demanding. In 1981 he said that journalism "was vastly easier than trying to write novels, and I was discouraged with the difficulty of writing them at that point. I had run into this business [in novel writing] of trying to tell a good story and yet say wonderful things about the nature of the world and society, touch all the ultimate. and yet at the same time, have it read like speed. There are so many pitfalls to this. I always had a terrible time with the story. My stories were always ending up begrounded. There I'd be, in the middle of the dunes, no gas in the tank. I loved journalism because it gave me the story, which I'd always been weakest in. Then I discovered the horror of it. Audiences liked it better . . . they wanted interpretation . . . critical faculties were being called for, rather than one's novelistic gifts. Under all those temptations, I must say I succumbed, and I spent a good many years working at the edge of journalism."

It is possible I received more praise as a new journalist than ever as a novelist. That is an irony that tempts me to spit to the wind: I never worked as a journalist and dislike the profession.

In a July 1983 interview, Mailer explained that he got into journalism by accident when Harold Hayes of Esquire asked him to cover the 1960 political conventions. "I discovered," he said, "that I had a flair for this kind of thing, and lo-and-behold I was now in journalism. I think I react to situations rather than make decisions . . . I've always found it comfortable to do journalism, but I've also always felt that it was not the high road." Despite this distaste for journalism, it should be noted that of his five books nominated for the National Book Award, only one, Why Are We in Vietnam?, is a novel. As noted, he received his first Pulitzer for The Armies of the Night, and his second for The Executioner's Song. But the Pulitzer for Song was awarded in the fictional category, an amazing circumstance in that Mailer has stated over and over that he never deviated from the known facts of the Gilmore saga. Nevertheless, he has always held that Song is a novel. He told William Buckley, Jr. shortly after it was published that he

wanted "to give the readers the feeling that they are participating in the life of the characters they're reading about. They shouldn't necessarily understand everything that's going on any more than we do in life. The moment we understand everything in a book, it can't possibly be fiction . . . [not] the way I'm defining it." Yet he concedes that the plot of *Song* was not an invention, but a gift. His instinct when writing it, as he noted in a 1985 interview, was to speed up narration, change dialogue here and there, "until," he said, "it dawned on me that the story was as good as it could be. I realized God is a much better novelist than the novelist."

Mailer reinforced his generic independence when speaking at a *New York Times* panel: "I think a writer has the right to call his work whatever he wants to call it. You might say I'm being confusing, but a writer has certain inalienable rights, and one is the right to create confusion." "You try to write," he said in 1987, "something that defies—no, not defies—that *straddles* categories. Categories are just critics' attempts to bring order to a complex aesthetic universe . . . These are all forms to be explored, not obeyed." As Bakhtin has noted, "the boundaries between fiction and nonfiction, between literature and nonliterature and so forth are not laid up in heaven."

Before laying out an implicit generic taxonomy that might help explain why novelist Mailer has spent huge chunks of his career on non-fiction (Mailer has again teamed up with Larry Schiller, his partner on *Executioner's Song* and several other books, on a new project: a CBS mini-series on accused FBI spy Robert Hanssen, a Bakhtinian stretch of the novel if there ever was one), I'd like to present three of Mailer's metaphors for the relationship of the novel and nonfiction narratives.

The first came in the 1979 interview with William Buckley, Jr., who asks a simple question: why did Mailer call Executioner's Song a "true life novel" (a sub-title dropped from later editions, it is worth noting). Mailer says: "I think of nonfiction as living on two stomachs, like the cow. In other words, the material is eaten, it's partially digested, it's regurgitated and then it's digested again." Mailer continues, "[The author] literally digests the material . . . to make a difficult passage more simple. And the one thing that nonfiction calls for is understanding-clear understanding of what's being said. It's hard to think of a good book of nonfiction whose waters are not clear. Whereas in fiction, what we want to do is we want to create life.'

Note here Mailer's emphasis on how the reader works through a novel's serpentines and surprises with the author, a joint operation that he endorses. The novels Mailer admires most are compounded of possibility, mystery, confusions, and evocations. A long-time communicant in the church of organic form, Mailer dislikes novels that are too schematic, and prefers suggestiveness to objective description. In a 1980 Washington Post Book Review interview, Mailer says that he wanted Executioner's Song to "read like a novel, to feel like a novel, to smell

like a novel." He continues saying that if you "don't know what is going to happen next, and you want to know what happens next, then you are in the presence of a novel."

FICTION: IMAGINED OR REAL?

The second metaphor emerges in this discussion and is also gastronomic. "Nonfiction," he says, "bears the same relationship to life as vitamin pills bear to food. In nonfiction, there's a tendency to digest the material, absorb it, and return it to you as vitamin pills.

The essence is gotten out of the various experiences, compressed and delivered to the reader. The reader can then digest the nonfiction and convert it back to living reality." He then makes what at first seems to be a puzzling remark: "Fiction," he says, "can have two modes, imagined and real. Ideally, fiction gives you the feeling that life is going on, that we are encountering life as we are living it. Nonfiction treats life as if the vividness of experience is over, and now the meaning of it will be presented to you." It is not crystal clear, at this point, whether Mailer is favoring the imagined or real mode of fiction. But in a 1981 interview, Mailer says that historians are "dealing with 10,000 facts and they select 300 very careful ones to make their case. And they call that stuff history when we all know it's fiction. The mark of a great historian is that he's a great fiction writer." In the next breath, Mailer provides the novelistic counterpart to the pure, objective historian. He states baldly, "Very few novels are ever true works of the imagination-I mean, how many Kafkas have there been?" I take from that for Mailer "real" novels have recognizable historical settings, imaginary toads in real gardens, whereas successful fabulists such as Kafka or Borges are rare birds. In the same interview, Mailer says that one of the reasons for the success of Executioner's Song is that it didn't have what he calls the "paranoid perfection" of writers who don't know how the world works—he may be thinking of Pynchon's brilliant but cold and closed system in Gravity's Rainbow (1973). Song succeeded, in part, he says, because "it had all the rough edges of reality. If I had conceived that book in my imagination, it would have been much more perfect and much less good." The old Coleridgean notion of imagination as the faculty that transcends reason and unifies the various mental faculties is not one that Mailer subscribes to.

Tom Wolfe's claim that journalism has usurped the place of the novel, prompts Mailer to present his third and finest metaphor for the issue: "I've said 100 times that I think journalism is easier than novel writing because you know the story . . . The difficulty of writing a truly impressive novel is equal to asking a singer of the stature of Pavarotti to compose his own music. Journalism makes opera singers out of us. We've got the story, and all we've got to do is go in and show our vocal cords."

WHERE DOES THIS LEAVE US?

I'd like to argue that Mailer's unspoken narra-

tive taxonomy depends on a fundamental dichotomy between the novel and nonfiction. The novel is spontaneous, resonant and intended to illumine questions; nonfiction is digested, concrete, and intended to provide answers. Novels are open, immediate, overbearing and intensify consciousness; nonfiction is safe, organized and buttresses pre-determined conclusions. In the novel, everything is slightly murky, swirling; when meaning does emerge, it does so in a flash of color and intuition. Nonfiction is like a trial where evidence is presented systematically. At the end of the day, the accretion of linked facts is overwhelming. Fiction is the high road and its plots are demanding; nonfiction is the low road and its plots are known ahead of time. Time in the novel ebbs and flows. Time in nonfiction has already been consumed.

But there are further divisions, subtler, and less remarked on by Mailer. These are the splits within both the novel and nonfiction, the minority within each form, which I suggest, make the first dichotomy a reversible dualism. Mailer holds that there are two kinds of novels: those based in history and those that are imagined. Dos Passos and Tolstoy vs. Kafka and Borges. He often calls the former the panoramic novel; the latter, the kind with "paranoid perfection," are often fables or allegorical. The first type, although grounded in reality, is more open-ended; the latter, although unfettered from the everyday, is closed. Mailer favors the former, but does so in part because history has provided him the plots. Each of Mailer's novels, even Why Are We in Vietnam? and Ancient Evenings, clearly demarcates an historical period. He clearly prefers the novel as history. Yet even though Mailer favors the historically based novel, he finds historical writing to be suspect because he believes it to be neither unbiased nor comprehensive. Historians marshal their evidence selectively, Mailer feels, thus fictionalizing it. All of this reveals a certain oblique, if unintended, contradiction in Mailer's argument. On the one hand, he endorses novels stretched on historical frames, using plots that are known. Yet on the other, he states emphatically that most historians don't really write history at all. "Most people learn," he said in 1980, "somewhere between . . . graduate school and life . . . that history is not history, but a series of immensely sober novels written by men who often don't have large literary talents, and have less to say about the real world than novelists . . . The desire to make these facts glow as facets in a mosaic that will enable us to perceive the past is not often done. Once we come to realize that no historians do it more closely than novelists. then all history becomes a novel.'

Mailer's reversible dualism may be confusing, but it is, perhaps, the result of his unwillingness fully and formally to endorse any generic scheme. He is a great polemicist, a street debater, and scores points at will in assessing narrative form. But he will never certify any one form-except some Platonic notion of the novel—with finality. As a long-time connoisseur of these forms, he will not willingly jettison anything from his tool

kit. He will continue to surprise us with his forms, bringing new variants out every few years and confounding those who would consign him to one room in the house of narrative. Yet if we look at Mailer's achievements, if we run a provisional line of merit through the dozen or so narratives upon which his reputation will rest, we may find some congruence between his critical utterances and his most successful projects.

Let's cross off poetry, drama and film, the short story and the essay (with whatever private regrets), and agree that Mailer's greatness does not reside in these forms. I would run a silver line of high achievement through the following: The Naked and the Dead, The Deer Park, Advertisements for Myself, An American Dream, Why Are We in Vietnam? The Armies of the Night, Of a Fire on the Moon, The Fight (1975), The Executioner's Song, Ancient Evenings, Harlot's Ghost, Oswald's Tale, and The Gospel According to the Son (1997). Pressed hard, I would trim the list to those surprising, elating narratives which augment narrative possibility in the service of the historical mosaic: The Naked and the Dead, Advertisements for Myself, An American Dream, The Armies of the Night, The Executioner's Song and Oswald's Tale. Six narratives of embattled Americans, two of whom are Norman Mailer (in Advertisements and Armies), and one, Stephen Rojack, in An American Dream, who is a fictional cousin. Mailer's finest works are evenly divided between those that present the authorial self and those that shroud it. Each of these texts is centered in an emblematic American moment. And each created more or less consternation—much of it generic—when it appeared.

As Mailer said in 1983, "I don't think it's an accident that I'm a novelist. Novelists have a wicked point of view—wicked as opposed to evil. They are interested in upping the ante. They are interested in more happening, not less." Mailer has the same huge regard for the novel as Bakhtin, who called it "a genre that is ever questing, ever examining itself, and subjecting its established forms to review." It's too bad that Bakhtin did not live to read the narratives of the wicked Mr. Mailer.

J. MICHAEL LENNON is the author or editor of four books about Norman Mailer, including his latest, Norman Mailer: Works and Days (with his wife Donna Pedro Lennon), and is the editor of Mailer's new collection, Reflections on a Spooky Art, which will be published by Random House on Mailer's 80TH birthday, January 31, 2002. (Quotations in this article will be included in the book.) He is Professor of English and Emeritus Vice President of Academic Affairs at Wilkes University, and serves with his wife as Mailer's archivist. The Lennons have resided part-year in Provincetourn for five years.



On Writing

BY ALEC WILKINSON

The following passages are from Wilkinson's recent book, My Mentor: A Young Man's Friendship with William Maxwell.

HERE IS NO OTHER WAY to begin as a writer or anything else than by imitation. You find, by chance or design, the works that appeal to you and begin to make use of them. At first it appears that you are no writer (or musician or painter or lawyer) at all, but only a collection of gestures and observations other people have already made and of references to them. Gradually, the influences recede, they become absorbed, they settle into you, so that instead of being the patterns that determine how your own work sounds or looks or proceeds, they become the technical means you might make use of to describe another person's face, the workings on each other of conflicting emotions, the weather, the impression of a landscape, or the design of a strategy for solving a problem. Jimmy Garrison, who had been a member of the John Coltrane Quartet, must have found himself

in need of money during the early 1970s, because he took a semester's teaching position at the college I went to, and was my faculty advisor, so I once heard him say, "First you have to learn all about your instrument, then you have to learn all about music, then you have to forget it all and learn how to play." In the forgetting one makes use of one's influences. It is important to have the best influences possible, to read the best books, listen to the best music, study the best paintings. How widely your interest spreads, how deeply, how long it continues are individual matters.

Surely the character and the abilities if the person who helps you matter also. I am as aware as anyone, I think, of how fortunate I was to have Maxwell's attention. I do not believe in false modesty it is a form of arrogance—but I also have no idea whether the work I have done has lasting merit. There are so many other ways to have done it, so many other choices I might have made. And someone else might have handled the same material more gracefully or with more ingenuity or insight or with greater objectivity. All I could manage was what I did at the time. I know that it is much better than it would have been had I not had Maxwell read it. Even on those occasions when he had no active hand in something I wrote, the choices I made, the way I approached a subject, the order in which I told what I knew, the attitude I adopted, were determined by his example and influence. Not that I was conscious of it, any more than a tennis player has in mind as he swings his racket the person who taught him his strokes. As I was writing about the Maxwells for their memorial, I realized that my sentences sounded like his. If I were younger and he was still living, I might have been concerned that I was overtaken by his influence when I should perhaps have resisted it. Instead, I felt elated at being able to summon him, obliquely, by surrendering to the words as they came through my hands onto the page.

In writing about him, I find myself again and again using the present tense.

We worked side by side for 15 years; it took me that long to have sufficient confidence in my own judgment not to depend on his. A different sort of man might have given me reason to doubt myself, felt competitive, lost patience.

One afternoon following another, one piece or one book succeeding another, we sat beside



ALEC WILKINSON

each other at a table-sometimes at Maxwell's apartment in New York, sometimes at the house in Westchester, and sometimes in the woods surrounding a rented house in Wellfleet-and he suggested cuts or changed a word I had learned recently to plain English, and otherwise taught me what a writer needs to know. Not that much, it turns out: when to compress and when to handle a subject at length; the order in which to present things; how to arrive at a companionable style; the benefit of the surprising juxtaposition; an awareness of what is and what isn't sensible to ask a reader to be a witness to. "Write as if you wish to be understood by an unusually bright 10-year-old," he said, or, "Henry James said 'Dramatize, dramatize, dramatize,' not 'Generalize, generalize, generalize." Or he took out scissors and cut up my sentences and rearranged them and pasted them back on the page. Or he leaned back from the table and asked, "Isn't there a simpler way to say that?" and I explained what I had been trying to convey, and he wrote my explanation in the margin and said, "That's it," and I was surprised to see that words I had just spoken could be writing.

I know that Maxwell and I were very different people, but we spent so much time together, and were so intimate in our conversations, and I relied so heavily on him and, without realizing it, modeled certain parts of my behavior after his, that I sometimes felt as if we were nearly alike. Proof that

such thinking could be carried too far came to me some years ago in a dream in which I went to a tailor to order my writer's coat. In the logic of the dream, having such a coat was a privilege offered by a guild to an apprentice it was ready to admit. I stood in front of the tailor's mirror while he held a tape measure along my arms and down my back and across my shoulder and then told me that my coat would be ready in a week. When I picked it up, he gave me a baseball jacket made from stripes of colors arranged like a hand of cards. I told him it wasn't my coat. He said it was. I said that writer's coats are blazers made of green or brown corduroy. Maxwell had a closet of such coats.

When I gave Maxwell a manuscript, he read it to the end, before suggesting any changes, in order to see what my intentions were and whether the writing had what he called the breath of life. He had never worked with a writer handing factual material, except in the form of memoir, and he used often to say, I don't know a thing about fact writing. What brought on this remark, I think, were those parts of a piece, which I had handled in a too literal way. When I began writing, I had confidence in anything that had actually happened—that is, I felt a fact earned its place in a piece because its appearance involved a depiction of reality. Later, I learned that except in the simplest and strictest forms of journalism, facts are best used judiciously, when they advance a narrative, or dramatize an element of someone's character, or contribute emotional weight to a scene. Or in the service of description when they can be employed in such a way that they illuminate an unusual or eccentric aspect of a subject and therefore reverberate poetically.

WHAT I FELT as I sat beside him as he read was calm. I had done all the work that I knew how to do, and now, through his asking me what I really meant to say, or what had been the resolution of the difficulty I had left off describing before I should have, or whether I hadn't gone on too much in my reaction to something, the piece would be made better than I knew how to make it. When he was finished, I would appear to be smarter than I was and more capable. Maxwell taught me to write the way primitive fathers taught their sons to stalk, to study tracks, to observe the behavior of their prey, to watch the sky for weather, to note the bloom of the bush that signifies that the fish in their migrations have returned to the river. A cobbler teaching a young man to make shoes is what I also sometimes thought of, I suppose because the things I needed to know were so practical and primary: how to write dialogue that sounded like someone actually speaking, how to make the reader forget there was someone between him and the landscape he was reading about, how to convey the impression of a scene with some directness of effect. Vladimir Horowitz once said that he imagined himself when he played the piano as being on the other side of the notes on the page, looking out.

Editing is a matter of understanding what a writer is trying to say and helping him say it if he needs the help. It is the work of an editor to make sure that the writer means what he says and says what he means, preferably with a degree of concision. The writers Maxwell worked with were on the whole so accomplished that his position also involved taking delight in what they brought into being. He knew when something worked or didn't, or when a story's success was a matter of the magazine's tastes, and he had no difficulty identifying and describing the problem. He was straightforward if the news was bad, a kindness that pained him, but his hope was that the writer would put the matter behind him and bring in another piece. When he retired, he was relieved to be no longer in the position of having to tell a writer that the New Yorker was unable to accept his or her manuscript. He once rejected a story by Mavis Gallant, then read it later in a book and, realizing he had been wrong, wrote her to say so.

Maxwell brought to editing, to reading another writer's work and helping him improve it, helping him see things he hadn't seen-repetitions, loquaciousness, the overuse of certain words, or the inexact use of them, a wrong turn taken, or the failure to bring a piece to its best conclusion-a selflessness that I never saw an example of anywhere else. If he thought you had something correct, he took pleasure in it. Reading was a near spiritual hunger with him, and he spent the last few years of his life reading hours a day, going back over the books he had loved. When I was having difficulty beginning my second book, he said, "Why don't you write me a letter each morning with the material you were intending to work on, then mail it to me." After several months I retrieved the letters and found that they formed a draft.

His advice was erudite and penetrating and completely reliable and uncontaminated by competition. He was known to see in stories writers had given up on the possibilities for development of a character or a line of narrative or for compressing a scene or combining one scene with another or for moving several sentences or a paragraph from the beginning of a piece to nearer the end so that the emotional tone of the story was changed, and the story was brought to life and made resonant in a way that it hadn't been. Partly this is a matter of imagination, of receptivity, a capacity for seeing others the way they would like to be seen, of a selfless interest in encouraging talent, and an intimacy with the catalog of technical possibility. What suggestions he made he offered unobtrusively, and he qualified them by saying that if the writer didn't agree with them, he should overlook them. As to how other writers regarded his opinion, when J. D. Salinger finished Catcher in the Rye, he drove to the Maxwells' house and over the course of an afternoon read it to them on their porch.

ALEC WILKINSON is author of six books, including A Violent Act, The Riverkeeper, and Big Sugar. Houghton Mifflin published My Mentor.



SUMMER 2002 EXHIBITIONS

2002 NATIONAL COMPETITION FINALIST - JULIE LEVESQUE

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JAMES GAHAGAN & HANK JENSEN

MEMBERS' JURIED:

PHOTOGRAPHY JUROR: KHRISTINE HOPKINS

GEORGE MCNEIL

THE COLLECTION UNCOVERED

MEL ROMAN

MEMBERS' OPENS: LARGE & SMALL WORKS

ARTISTS' 12 X 12 PANELS

NORA SPEYER

CANDY JERNIGAN

PROGRAMS & EVENTS:

MUSEUM SCHOOL CLASSES:

NEW 8 WEEK INTENSIVE

TUESDAY LECTURE SERIES

MUSIC: DICK MILLER, BLUE

DOOR, DONNA ROLL

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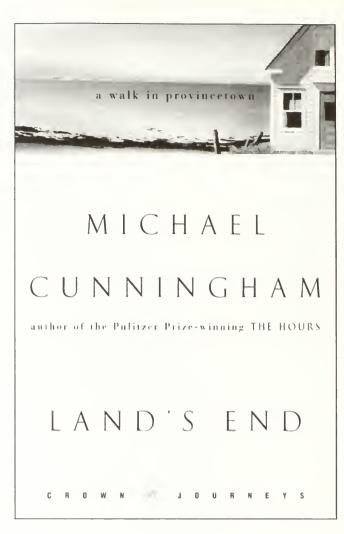
The Living

rovincetown has been rambunctious, remote, and amenable to outsiders for as long as it has existed. It was originally part of Truro, the next town over, but in 1727 Truro disgustedly drew a line at Beach Point, and the resulting sliver of loose morals and questionable practices was called Provincetown, over the protests of its citizens, who preferred the name Herringtown. Being inexpensive and loose, it has long attracted artists, who continue to compose a larger percentage of the general population than any other city or town I can think of. Eugene O'Neill lived there when he was a young, unknown alcoholic struggling to write plays; Tennessee Williams summered there when he was a world-famous alcoholic struggling to write plays. Milton Avery, Charles Hawthorne, Hans Hofmann, Robert Motherwell, and Mark Rothko have lived there, as have Edmund Wilson, John Reed, John Waters, Denis Johnson, and Divine. Norman Mailer, Stanley Kunitz, Mary Oliver, and Mark Doty live there still.

Among the less well known are Radio Girl, who walked the streets announcing the news she received from a radio in her head, and a woman who then called herself Sick, who lived in a treehouse she and her friends built in a big tree off Bradford Street and who kept her name but altered the spelling and pronunciation, to Sique (pronounced Seek) when she met and married the head of the art department at a big university and suddenly found herself transported from a life of shoplifting at the A&P to one that involved giving parties for academics in southern California. Still today the Inside-Out Man, a citizen of sixty or so with a full beard and a tendency to dress for winter no matter what the season, walks along the East End of town, sweeping the sidewalks with furious concentration, wearing all his clothes inside out

In summer the streets of Provincetown are as crowded as a carnival midway, and the people who make up the crowds are largely Caucasian. This is Cape Cod, a kingdom of white people, and that is among its more problematic aspects. This strangeness has been heightened, recently, by the practice of bringing in Jamaican workers for the summers, mostly to do the low-paying kitchen work no one else is willing to do. Some of the Jamaicans who come to work in Provincetown for the summer have taken up year-round residence, and it seems possible—it does not seem impossible—that the following reversal is gradually taking place: the white gav men and lesbians, who for so long were the itinerants and outsiders, tend now to own most of the businesses and much of the real estate in town, and the Jamaican immigrants are establishing themselves as the new, marginalized, defiantly embedded population.

Among the strollers and shoppers on a summer afternoon, it is not unusual to see, within a lifty-foot radius, all of the following: a crowd of elderly tourists who have come for the day on a tour bus or have disembarked from a cruise ship anchored in the harbor; a pack of muscle boys on their way to the gym; a vacationing mother and father shepherding their exhausted and fussy children through the shops; a pair of lesbians with a dachshund in a rambow collar; two gay dads in chinos and Izod shirts pushing their adopted daughter in a stroller; a dreadlocked and ostentatiously tattooed young woman who works at the head shop; a man dressed, very convincingly, as Celine Dion; elderly women doing errands; several closeted schoolteachers from various parts of the country who come to Provincetown for two weeks every year to escape the need for secrecy; several weary fishermen coming home from their stints on a scallop boat; a bond trader in three-hundred-dollar sandals, up for the weekend from New York; and a brigade of furious local kids on skateboards, seeing how close they can come to the pedestrians without actually knocking one over, a stunt that is usually but not always successful.



After Labor Day the crowds diminish considerably, except for holiday weekends, and the town is gradually given over again to its year-round residents. For those who've decided to settle there, Provincetown is an impoverished mother, gentle and loving; an old ribald mother who's been through too much to be shockedby any habits you've acquired in the larger world and who will share with you whatever she's got, though she lives on little herself and can't keep much food in the house these days. Year-round jobs are scarce, and the ones that do exist tend to numb the brain. Most people work two or three jobs in the summers. If you work for wages in Provincetown, it's not unusual to find yourself cleaning a guest house in the mornings, taking an hour off, and then going to your waiter job until midnight. You get through the winters on savings and unemployment checks.

Uncountable numbers of young or no-longeryoung people have gone there to escape situations they could no longer tolerate—addictions or deadend jobs or discouraging love affairs, whatever questionable fate they seemed to have made for themselves—or simply to take a break from their tolerably difficult lives and dwell for a while in peace. People often move there after their patience, their energy, or their greed have been exhausted elsewhere. The woman who makes stained-glass Christmas ornaments and sells them at crafts fairs may once have been a corporate attorney; the man laboring over his poetry and working nights in a restaurant may once have been an advertising

executive. Provincetown's hierarchies of class and status are more liquid than they are in most places. The girl who cleared your table at the restaurant where you had breakfast is seated next to you at the dinner party you go to that night.

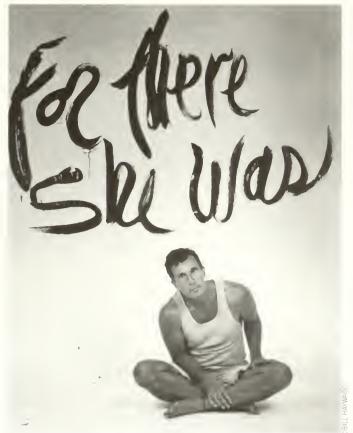
Although it is as difficult to live anonymously within the borders of Provincetown as it is in any small town, it is one of the places in the world you can disappear into. It is the Morocco of America, the New Orleans of the north. While the people of Provincetown are capable of holding grudges with Olympian fervor—your sins may be forgiven there, but they are rarely forgotten-it is ruled fundamentally by kindness and a respect for idiosyncrasy. Bad behavior is frowned upon; unorthodoxy is not. A male-to-female transsexual may stand in line at the A&P behind a woman trying to manage her three unruly children, and no one thinks anything of it. They are both buying the same brands of cat food and yogurt.

You are safe in Provincetown, in just about every sense of the word. In the literal sense it is almost entirely free of crime (with the notable exception of a

thriving bicycle-stealing industry-if you leave your bike unlocked overnight, you have more or less already sent it to any one of a number of unknowable used-bicycle shops up Cape). In a subtler way, at least in part because Provincetown has not thrived since its whales were slaughtered, the town at large attaches no outstanding sense of shame to those who break down or give up; who cannot cope or don't care to cope; who decide it would be easier or simply more fun to stop going out in daylight or to grow a chestlength beard and wear dresses or to sing in public whenever they feel a song coming on.

Most people who come looking for respite stay a year or two or three and move on, because they've gotten what they came for or because they can't take the winter silence or can't find a decent job or because they've found that they brought with them the very things they'd meant to escape. Some, however, have settled in. Some of the elderly sitting on the benches in front of Town Hall were once young criminals or outpatients who thought they were coming to Provincetown to regather their energies in a cheap apartment with a water view, maybe try writing some poetry or music, catch their breath, and then move on.

Apart from the descendants of Portuguese fishermen, who have been there for generations but keep very much to themselves, almost everyone in Provincetown is a transplant. I have rarely met anyone who was born there, though I know many who consider it their true home and who treat their earlier lives either as extended mistakes finally made right by moving to Provincetown or as prolonged periods of incubation during which their genetic strands were gradually stitched into the fabric of character needed for them to be born as themselves, fully formed, right here. Provincetown is, in this regard, an



PORTRAIT OF MICHAEL CUNNINGHAM FROM BAD BEHAVIOR, BILL HAYWARD

anomaly-it is a village every bit as distinct and habit-bound as villages in Sicily or County Kerry but one that routinely accepts newcomers and grants them unequivocal rights of citizenship.

Among its transplanted residents Provincetown tends to inspire the sort of patriotism associated with small struggling nations. Those who live there usually defend it ferociously to outsiders and complain about it only among themselves. It is cantankerously devoted to its quirks and traditions, and like many places in love with their own ways of doing and being, it has predicted its own downfall almost from the day it was founded. In the mid-1800s, when a wooden sidewalk was built along one side of the sand road that eventually became Commercial Street, it aroused such dismay over what it portended about the loss of Provincetown's soul that a number of citizens refused to walk on it and trudged resolutely through the ankle-deep sand all their lives. In the twenty-plus years I've been going there, I have heard the town's imminent demise predicted over and over again. It is dying because its waters are fished out. It is dying because it has no jobs. It is dying because artists no longer live there in sufficient numbers. It is dying because it is beginning to prosper but at the hands of the wrong sort of people-rich people who live in cities and want to use Provincetown only as a summer refuge. It is dying because its soul is exhausted, because its schools are no good, because so many have been taken by the AIDS epidemic, because no one can afford the rents.

Some members of the P-town population (it is, by the way, perfectly all right to call it "P-town") live according to a central simplicity as absolute as creed. They prefer earnestness to irony, the local to the immense. Provincetown lives at a bemused distance from the rest of the country. It does not

quite consider itself American, and in this regard it is probably more right than wrong. Last summer I found a pair of quotation marks at the flea market in Wellfleet. They had come from a movie marquee. They were eight inches high, glossy black; they had a bulky, elderly symmetry. I gave them to Melanie, believing she'd know what to do with them. She was on her way to California then, and she took one pair of quotation marks with her, to leave behind in San Francisco. She keeps the other pair in Provincetown.

Although it's better known for its gayness than for its heterosexuality, Provincetown is home to a considerable quotient of straight people, and everyone lives pretty much in peace. Just as the Log Cabin Republican not only can't ignore the existence of stone butches but buys his coffee from one every morning, straight people and gay people are all passengers on the same ship and couldn't remain separate even if they'd like to. At its best Provincetown can feel like an improved version of the world at large, a version in which sexuality, though always important, is not much of a deciding fac-

tor. For several years, long ago, I played poker every Wednesday night at the home of Chris Magriel, a woman in her seventies who lived in a den of paisley shawls, embroidered pillows, and elderly stuffed animals. I was coming out then, unable to broach the subject with my family, and when I told Chris I thought I was gay, her milky blue eyes deepened in thought and she said, "Well, dear, if I was your age, I'd want to try it, too." She didn't embrace or console me. She simply treated it as the matter of small concern I'd hoped it might be. I told her about the man I was dating. She said, "He sounds very nice." Then we started laying out food for the other poker players, who were due to arrive at any moment.

In summer the straight tourists are generally as amused by the more flamboyant members of the population as they are meant to be. It's common to see someone taking a picture of his mother, a champagne blonde in jeans and Reeboks, with her arm cheerfully around the shoulders of a man dressed as Cher. Last summer in the West End I passed a drag gueen who was flyering for a show (flyering is a nonverb you hear frequently in Provincetown-it refers to the act of distributing flyers that advertise a show, often involving costumes to excite interest in same). The man in question, an extremely tall man wearing Minnie Mouse eyelashes and a blue beehive wig that made him just under eight feet high, stood before a raptly attentive boy about four years old. "All right," the man in the wig said, "but this is the last time I'm doing it." He lifted his wig off his head and showed the child the crew cut underneath. The child fell into paroxysms of laughter. The man replaced his wig and walked on.

Michael Cunningham won the Pulitzer Prize for The Hours. This excerpt is from his book. "Land's End."

The American Who Fell In A Hole

BY SUSAN SELIGSON

In January 2001, my husband Howie Schneider and I traveled to India. I was researching a chapter for my book Going with the Grain; A Wandering Bread Lover Takes a Bite out of Life, to be released this fall by Simon & Schuster. Our good friend Lenny Alberts, a physician at Provincetown's Outer Cape Health Services, joined us. We hunkered down for a few days in Delhi with my friend Shubhi, a writer and television producer, and her husband S.P., a natural resource consultant whose success is reflected in that peculiarly Indian brand of wealth that staggers the imagination. I met Shubhi on my first solo trip to India. We became fast friends and kept in touch over the years. Indians are famed for their hospitality, and Shubhi and S.P. could not wait to lavish their generosity on our American threesome. In his grandiose fashion ("It is all arranged!") S.P. hired a driver to take Howie, Lenny, and me on a bone-rattling road excursion across Rajasthan to the desert fortress of Jaisahner. The adventure ended in the blue city of Jodhpur, where we boarded a plane back to Delhi. With just one night at Shubhi's to calm our stomachs and rest our ravaged bodies, we flew to Calcutta. Packing enough shalwar kameez, shawls, baubles and bangles to last her through the monsoon, Shubhi came along for the ride. And oh what a ride it was.

HERE ARE TWO TYPES OF PEOPLE in the world: those who love Calcutta, and sane people. There's no denying it's a noisy stinking pit of a place, perilously decrepit, corrupt to the core and congested beyond belief. Calcutta has the population density of a can of worms. To say there are a large number of "homeless" is like pointing out that in Beijing one is likely to encounter many Chinese people. Calcutta possesses the world's largest banyan tree, a perplexingly clean, efficient subway, and a park just for rats. I adore it.

Shubhi, too, is sentimental about the city. Though she isn't Bengali she grew up in the Calcutta suburb of Hooghly and studied at Santiniketan, the West Bengal liberal arts university founded by the great writer, painter and Nobel Laureate Rabindrinath Tagore. On my first visit to India I hopped all over the place. But it was Calcutta that captured my imagination and affection. You can safely wander its streets and find your way back, like in Venice. Picture Venice with cows, several million overflowing toilets and a chorus of tubercular coughs.

What also impressed me about that seething mess of a city was the level of individual dependability and efficiency that somehow kept things humming along despite the corruption and decay. The train may or may not appear on time, but the rickshaw-wallah will. In the throes of the near-daily street demonstrations, the riots these become, the power outages, dire epidemics and floods of biblical proportions, one can count on the prompt return of one's laundry. You may be unable to secure a working telephone or a flight to Delhi but you are always within sneezing distance of a tailor who will cheerfully and expertly hem your shalwar kameez right then and there for next to nothing. My first time in India it took a while to shake that native New Yorker habit of repeating requests over and over, as if to an idiot. Indians' characteristic politeness and reserve will not permit them to say, "Give it a rest, I heard you the first time." But they heard you the first time. My lack of faith came back to taunt me at a hotel coffee shop. "I'd like some tea," I said to the busy waiter, and then "and I'd like some tea." "Some tea please," I repeated as he passed within earshot. Minutes later the waiter appeared with three cups of tea—one for each time I'd asked.

I'd booked us rooms at the Fairlawn Hotel on Sutter Street. It's a goofy, endearing place, Lawlty Towers meets the Raj. Crammed with wicker lawn furniture and strangled with potted plants, the lobby and courtyard are a stage upon which dramas play out daily. The Fairlawn was built 218 years ago by a European, its deed describing it as a "Pukka" building-one built of brick. The ruling Nawabs of that time allowed Bengalis to build only from coconut palm and mud. Along with her husband Ted, Mrs. Violet Smith has lorded over the place since 1962. When she was a toddler Vi's Armenian parents brought the family to India via Pakistan. In 1942 she met Ted, a major in the British Army stationed in West Bengal. Vi will tell anyone who'll listen how she played host to Tom Stoppard, Sting, Dominique Lapierre, Patrick Swayze and the cast of City of Joy, parts of which were filmed in the hotel. Bewigged, her face painted, the gregarious and lovable Vi still makes an appearance every night at the Fairlawn's family style dinners, sodden, tasteless English fare included in the room price. The

last time I stayed at the Fairlawn she was strutting around with an obese toy poodle. Day and night in a chair by the reception desk sat the doddering Ted, dressed as if he expected to be called off to a tiger hunt, his lips frozen in a disdainful pout. The waiters at the Fairlawn wear turbans and cummerbunds and sneer at you as they dish out boiled potatoes and greasy mutton. They put an end to it—"it upset some of the guests," says Violet but until recently the Fairlawn served "bed tea," a Victorian custom whereby a servant enters the room before dawn and sets down a tray of tea so Memsahib will have it when she wakes. The Fairlawn is crumbling, the beds are hard as rocks, the plumbing is deplorable and the rooms are noisy and haphazardly furnished. But I'm convinced there is no place like it and I want Howie and Lenny to experience the Fairlawn before its likely demise. Howie tries to keep an open mind. Shubhi is pining for the marble splendor and Brahmin comforts of the nearby Oberoi Grand. Lenny thinks the place is a dump.

Violet turns 80 the day after we arrive, and for her birthday someone overseas has sent her what we all believe to be the first Big Mouth Billy Bass to hit the subcontinent. Violet flips the switch for the servants, who watch the crooning, flopping fish with a look of bewilderment. "My but isn't that just soooooo clev-ah" chirps Violet. I remind her I've stayed here before. "Oh yes, yes how are you darling?" she asks me. She cups her hands around my face and jiggles it. "Such a sweet, lovely girl." I love this hotel.

Shubhi phones her college friend Anu, who comes to the Fairlawn with her daughter Ritoo to collect us. For the duration of our stay in Calcutta we have a driver at our disposal, thanks again to S.P. ("It is all arranged.") Actually I was looking forward to walking, but here were are smashed into yet another Ambassador ("everything makes noise except the horn") and crawling in the city's horrendous traffic to the Oberoi. It takes five minutes to walk there. Anu is a sweet, well-meaning but lonely woman who lives with her teen-age daughter and a servant in a fortified apartment complex which, like Shubhi's home in Delhi's Sadhana enclave, is meant to cushion the very rich from the harsh realities of the street. But Anu's cramped, nearly windowless apartment with its multiple deadbolts seems suited to a city under military siege, more war-torn Beirut than Brahmin luxury. Her husband, the captain of an oil tanker, is home only for occasional visits. Ritoo, who would fit right in at any American shopping mall, is finishing private school and cavorting with a young German ecologist. Even with her loud sarees, high-volume Carol Channing voice and diamond-studded baubles Anu strikes me as a defeated woman, a virtual prisoner. She's recovering from thyroid surgery, mostly she just sits. She sits at the club, sits in her parlor, sits in her friends' parlor. It's an expression



SUSAN AND HOWIE AT THE FAIRLAWN, HOURS BEFORE THE ACCIDEN

wealthy Indian women use. "I'm going to go sit with Anu," says Shubhi.

My impatience with Anu soon melts into gratitude. For without her Howie might be maimed for life. At the Fairlawn, at New Market, among the beggars working Sudder Street word spread quickly about "the American who fell in the hole." In the night, in my bed, in my home, the scene still replays in my head sometimes, and I reach for Howie beside me. Here is what happens:

The ladies have mapped out an evening for us. We meet at Anu's and walk next door to the Dalhousie Club, a seemingly deserted network of what look like the lobbies of chain motels. The air is a sauna spiked with car exhaust. Shubhi and Anu lead us outside to the "garden," a fetid patch of dead grass with a lawn tennis court that has seen better days. They are thinking; tea and pakoras. We are thinking; malaria. Two platters of pakoras later we return to Anu's apartment and drink wine while Howie goes off with the driver to fax his weekly cartoon to the Provincetown Banner. By the time he returns, Ritoo has joined us. We sit and make idle chatter. "Why don't you have a manservant?" asks Shubhi. "This is a woman's house now," says Anu. "What happened to the driver you used to have?" "I had to fire him. He was chasing my maid and I can't have that."

In keeping with her campaign to impart the complete Indian experience Shubhi suggests we dine in a Calcutta suburb called Tangra. Tangra is a community of Chinese tanners, who reside in a homogenous clump because of the Hindi stricture against handling leather. Packed into the grimy streets of Tangra are three hundred tanneries and a string of Chinese restaurants. I find that combination unsettling, but say nothing as we settle into two cars—Howie with Shubhi and Ritoo, Lenny and I riding with Anu—and proceed along streets that grow darker and darker until we find ourselves in a hellish no-man's land lit only by the embers of street fires. The restaurant signs flicker in the gloom, except for Kafulok, the ladies' choice. It is closed on Mondays. For a moment I think we are off the hook, but the women leap out of the tandem cars, confer and decide on another place.

I am an earthy babe and no germophobe, but as we pull up I wonder, is it okay to ingest the food in this godforsaken place? That's what I am thinking when Anu lets out a deafening shriek: "Oh God he's fallen!" Oh, no. What atrocious scene awaits us? This is India - anything can happen, likely to prove far worse than one can imagine. The other car has pulled up behind us. Lenny and I get out, reluctantly. The first thing I see is the brown patina of Howie's jacket, crumpled and sinking. Howie is falling to the ground. Is he having a heart attack? Oh God. Oh shit.

Howie has plunged into an uncovered drainage canal, mistaking it for a shadow on the pavement as he stepped aside to let Ritoo and Shubhi pass.

Pulled to safety by a gaggle of pavement dwellers, he is disoriented, dizzy, and covered with slime. His glasses are splattered with toxic muck. The hole is five-foot deep. He could've drowned in there. More pavement dwellers appear, seemingly out of cracks in the walls. They are barefoot, clad only in filthy dhoti cloths, and hovering solicitously over Howie, who is trying to stand. Shubhi is standing back and away in stunned silence. Ritoo weeps, Lenny is searching for Howie's pulse. And Anu is barking into her cell phone in Bengali. Who is she talking to?

We manage to walk Howie to the larger car but he sinks beside it and sprawls onto the foul pavement. He will die here, I think. I dragged him to India and he will die in this putrid hellhole and I will return home without my husband and live the rest of my life in guilt and sorrow. I remember from my nurses aide days how to make a human stretcher. The pavement dwellers are staring at me with their sad black eyes, waiting to be told what to do. I extend my arms, palms up, and they instantly follow suit. We clasp hands under Howie and slide him awkwardly into the back seat of the car. Lenny gently arranges Howie's arms to close the door. We all see now that one of those arms is snapped and pointing in the wrong direction. Inside the car Howie's arm flops around as if it isn't even attached. Anu tells the driver: Assembly of God Hospital. We head out of the darkness on to the noisy clogged streets of the city, and inch our way along. Howie is talking and making jokesfor my benefit, he tells me later. Because I believe he is dying my behavior must be incredibly strange. A beggar approaches the car and raps on Howie's window. He can't see Howie but he's

looking right at me. Right, I'm thinking. Tell me about YOUR problems. But Lenny rolls the window down and passes the man a coin.

When we finally pull up to the hospital we see the fruits of Anu's frantic phone calls. Waiting for us, standing shoulder to shoulder like some elite force, are the chief of cardiology, the chief of neurology, the orthopedist and the house staff. A private, paying hospital, the facility reveals few of the high-tech trappings of a western hospital. But it is immaculate. Before we go on the ward we must remove our shoes. Minutes after Howie is carried up to intensive care he has received a tetanus shot, his arm has been arranged in a protective sling, and he is rolled off to X-ray. The chief of cardiology is the most senior doctor at the hospital, and Anu's personal physician. He will stay with Howie through the night.

The accident happened at about 8 p.m. By midnight Howie is out of surgery, his arm encased in an immense plaster cast. It was a bloodless procedure. Once Howie was anesthetized Dr. Chakraborty popped his arm back in place. Shubhi draws a Kali goddess on the cast and writes in Hindi, "I fell into the Black Hole of Kolkata." We go to catch some sleep at the Fairlawn, where Violet and her deskman work out the logistics of moving Howie and me to a room on the first floor. Shubhi is inconsolable. She blames herself: "I never should have come with you to Calcutta." Anu is distraught and babbling. She blames herself: "I should have had my cook prepare a dinner for us." Vi is clucking and sighing. Se blames us: "See what happens when you don't dine here at the hotel?'

By the time we return to the hospital in the morning Howie is alert and upbeat. He has also fallen madly in love with Shidi, his nurse. "You pronounce it shitty," she tells him. She is young, slight and dark and her prim nursey whites and stiff cap make her look like a career girl doll dressed by a child. "I'm taking you with me," Howie jokes. "Good," she says. "I like go with you." When Howie refuses his breakfast Shidi shakes a tiny finger at him and says, "You must eat for your strength, and in India we don't waste food." I think it is here, in this hospital with Nurse Shidi, that Howie finally falls a little in love with India.

After we get Howie settled in the hotel room I set out for a walk to the chemist to fill one of his prescriptions, and the resident beggar rushes to greet me. He is permanently bent in half and slowly gains ground by swinging his body to one side and then the other. His limbs were probably deliberately broken when he was a child, to make him a more effective beggar. He swings close to me, looks at me with unmistakable tenderness and asks, "Madame, how is your husband?" And I, too, fall in love with India, all over again.

It's our last day in India and we're all falling apart. Limping and lugging the weight of his immense plaster cast, Howie's exhausted. Shubhi has come down with a bad cold. I'm suffering post-traumatic stress flashbacks of that dark street in Tangra. What will make us feel better? It occurs to me what I must do.

I will make a pot of Jewish chicken soup. Shubhi loves the idea, and offers her driver

Kan in for the trip to INA, Delhi's most vere market. The narrow ranks of Delhi's uppies make a point of shopping here. "Whatever it is you will find what you need," she tells me. Dill, turnips, egg noodles, bouillion, she assures me they'll have it all. I'm expecting Fairway or Balducci's with an eastern cast. I'm not disappointed. With a barefoot porter trailing after me I pop from stall to stall in search of the ingredients for my soup. I must appear very determined because English-speaking merchants ask to know what I'm cooking. "Jewish-style chicken subwith noodles," I tell them, and they no laugh, happy to get in on the act. (11) nan escorts me the length of the mark. It a stall where I can buy parsnips. I fiv. 10r fresh spinach, red and vellow belt oppers for a salad. I don't have to buy the linckens, which is a good thing, since the mes in the market are still alive and cluc¹ _ 5. Brijendra will take care of that. I find a package of egg fettuccini, which will work out fine.

Back at Sadhana Enclave, out of habit I grab a bag of groceries to bring in the house. I felt Kanati's hand just barely alighting on my shoulder. He has a stern expression I hadn't seen before. Of course. Only servants unload packages. I wash up, chat with Howie a while in our room, and come out to see what's doing in the kitchen. I don't recognize my groceries. They've been scrubbed, pruned and artfully arranged in huge bowls. Shubhi gives me an apron and I get to work. Now Brijendra, Shubhi's manservant and cook, is the pupil. Standing back a bit with his arms folded, he watches me. I can't read his expression. How does he feel about this foreign woman usurping his kitchen? I chop one carrot. In a flash Brijendra swipes the others and begins chopping them. It is not proper for a guest of the mistress to be in here like this, doing the prep work. I quickly come to understand that I am not cooking this soup, I am teaching Brijendra how to cook it. Feeling a bit embarrassed I dredge the greens in bottled water before arranging them in a big salad bowl and topping them with sliced bell peppers and the toasted almonds Lenny and I bought at the Calcutta bazaar.

The meal is a hit. Panna and Sunny, Shubhi's daughter and son-in-law, drain several bowls of soup and chomp away at the salad, declaring all of it "so unusual and delicious." But no one is happier than my weary, onearmed Howie, draped in the new shawl Lenny and I bought him at the Calcutta bazaar.

As we embrace and say our good-byes S.P. tells us not to worry, at Delhi airport there will be men to greet us with a wheelchair and takes us straight through to check-in. "It is all arranged," he says. And so it was.

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William Phillips

BY CHRISTOPHER BUSA

illiam Phillips, silver-haired, eagle-eyed, ancient editor of Partisan Review for more than 70 years, feels his energy these days is "not bad." Several years ago his eyes began to fade from a condition called macular degeneration. Now Phillips can no longer read manuscripts, so he has readers come in, not every day, but often as possible. He keeps up with the flow of literary current, though he can't sustain his earlier effort. He still has an active role at the magazine, currently published by Boston University. His wife, the scholar Edith Kurzweil, now handles most of the editing and correspondence.

Phillips does not know of another editor of a little magazine who has had such a lengthy tenure. The Dul, the great magazine of the day that Phillips was weaned on, lasted about 10 years, which is about the average life of a small literary publication. After a decade, the founder's energy fades; it is renewed or the publication ceases. "How long did Satre's Le Temps Moderne last in Paris, maybe eight or 10 years," Phillips considers. "Transition, which published Kafka and Joyce, also did not last very long."

Almost 20 years ago, Phillips published his memoir, A Partisan View: Five Decades in the Literary Life. At its best there is a punchy aphoristic quality to his writing, knocking a little wisdom into one's head. Reading along, he mentions an incident that he summarizes. The next paragraph will go into more detail. I love that feeling of seeming to come to an end, then seeing the thought surge again. The editor has to bring out latent things. He or she has to be on the side of the reader, and care about the reader's pleasure.

In the early '30s, when he was a member of the John Reed Club, he dreamed of starting a magazine, saying it was a way of expressing his point of view and of getting a group of likeminded writers together. The dream of a magazine is an unusual dream. The best are sprung by strong creative vision, a need for a movement supported by a broader communitv than the simple ego of the founder. Eliot started Criterion; Robert Motherwell and Harold Rosenberg founded possibilities, which lasted one issue. To go on 50 years, as Partisan Review has done, is proof of a social need that is being fulfilled.

Last fall I drove out to Wellfleet to interview Phillips and Kurzweil in their summer home near the Wellfleet Library. One of my interests was to talk about the personality of the editor. What sort of a person becomes a historically significant editor? Partisan Review has always been aware of the intellectual and literary situation, awareness on multi-levels in art, writing, music, theater, and politics. I was an undergraduate at the University of Minnesota in the '60s. Phillips taught there for a semester in the late '50s. Minnesota, then, was the hothed of the New Criticism. Joseph Warren Beach was there before he went to Harvard. Allen Tate and John Berryman were still there and I took courses from them.

I graduated from the University of Minnesota and took time between college and graduate school to go to Paris for a year. I'd had a letter from Richard Poirier informing me that, having been accepted, I could come after my year in Paris, pro forma. In 1970 I started at Rutgers. I took Phillips' course in contemporary criticism the next year at the suggestion of Poirier. Poirier advised me on my dissertation on D. H. Lawrence before I abandoned it, hoping to escape having that scholarly brand burned into my hide. I knew I wanted to start, not in the university, but in the world opened by the pages of a magazine.

I was very interested in Norman Mailer and Poirier picked up on that. I had done a college honors thesis on Mailer. Poirier was writing his book on Mailer, plus I had lived in Provincetown. In his essay, "Learning from the Beatles," Poirier showed he was as interesting as Roland Barthes who wrote seriously on women wrestling, both taking popular culture seriously as performance, and bringing to it all the skills of high critical analysis. Almost all the techniques of close reading that the New Critics applied to literature, the even newer critics were applying to sociology. That was one of the reasons I went to Rutgers. Poirier had built up the English Department in the early '60s and fantastic people began to teach there. I studied with Frank Kermode, Thomas Edwards, George Levine, Marius Bewley, and Paul Fussell. But it was Poirier who suggested I take Phillips' course.

Poirier knew I was interested in magazines and he thought I'd enjoy the atmosphere at



WILLIAM PHILLIPS AND CHRISTOPHER BUSA

Partisan Review. Phillips reports in his book that Poirier resigned from Partisan Review in '71, when I was beginning graduate school. That's interesting to me in the light of a rather horrible story detailed in Phillips' book, a disturbing glimpse at literary betrayal. My blood boils at the idea that a magazine's archives might be sealed away from the editor who created them, including folders of manuscripts and correspondence with authors.

"William didn't put the details in," Kurzweil said. "It was worse. William and I came in the morning, early, because we had a truck hired to take the extra magazines up to Boston. We tried to get in, but there was no way we could open the door. William called the vice-president. A guy came over, said he couldn't understand it, and he broke a window and opened the door for us."

The lock had been changed. By nine o'clock the Rutgers provost came with a piece of paper saying that they had no right to be in their office. "We were over our deadline for leaving and we were supposed to have been out of the office already. To make the long story short, they wouldn't let us take the papers. In the meantime, I was going to get tenure."

Kurzweil, who has a Ph.D. in sociology, went upstairs and called a lawyer, Bob Montgomery, who said "This goes back to Nazi Germany, it does not happen in America." They agreed their situation had nothing to do with literature, but they knew no business in America could be treated this way and get away with it. Kurzweil and Phillips were told could they take out what they needed for the immediate future and they were allowed use of the Xerox machine and the help of a grad student to copy what was of interest to them. "They wouldn't even let us take the manuscripts that were to be published," Kurzweil said. "We were told, 'This belongs to us."

The Rutgers University community thought the magazine was old hat and decided to take it over. Of course, ignored was the small issue of respect for lifetime achievement. Phillips says PR was sustained by a series of miracles. My motto, as editor of Provincetown Arts is, "Be realistic: plan for a miracle." Miracles come in the form of people, and money out of the blue. Putting a magazine together is a sociologically creative activity. In the '40s and '50s I watched my father read all the artist-run magazines, like Verve, Triple V, Tiger's Eye, and It Is, all managed by people who were participants in the inner circle. They were not journalists writing from the outside. "You really have to feel you've got to do it," Kurzweil said. "Otherwise you could use your energy for something that makes money.'

A key word in the Rutgers-Partisan Review lawsuit was that the magazine was required to deposit its papers in the University library. Nobody wanted to give a black eye to Rutgers, but there was Poirier, professor of English, saying on the stand, in response to how he would define deposit: "All kinds of ways," insisting that the meaning of the word does not depend on the dictionary, but on the imagination. Depending less on the dictionary than on common-sense usage, derived from crucial experiences with banks, my sense is most people put money in a bank, understanding they deposit their money with a view to getting it back, not giving it away to the bank for all time. That was the question the court was obliged to decide.

Kurzweil was going to be a witness, so she couldn't attend the trial. For her it was hair-raising. The judge had already called them in two days before the trial and indicated that Rutgers was wrong. The University would not settle until the judge again said, "You'll either settle or I'll have to rule against Rutgers, which I don't want to do." Part of the settlement was that Phillips would not ask for damages and he would not talk to the press. That's why nobody knew what was going on.

Several years later, a member of the search committee appointed by Adelphi University, where she taught, tapped Kurzweil on her arm. She did not recognize him. He said, "You don't remember me, but I was the graduate student who had to Xerox all those papers at Partisan Review. I went to William and said, 'I cannot do this. It goes against everything I stand for.' And Phillips said: 'If you're not going to do it somebody else will. You need the money, go ahead and do it."

Can an editor escape feuds? Almost every good editor I know has gotten arrested or had a civil trial for something he or she published. This quarrel proves that Phillips is a good editor. He has material that's valuable and people want to take it from him.

The story still troubles me, especially since I know some of the participants. Poirier, a slippery genius, may have flirted too much with the counterculture. He was accused at that time of being a "swinger," swinging between Henry James and John Lennon, but answered, quoting Robert Frost, "One could do worse than be a swinger of birches." Shortly after Partisan Review moved to Boston University, Poirier started his own magazine at Rutgers, Raritan.

One inspirational essay for appropriating popular culture into sophisticated thinking was Susan Sontag's "Notes on Camp," first published in PR. Because it became such a famous essay, Phillips began to refer to it as an essay begotten out of an Immaculate Conception, because nobody knew where it had been published originally. I ask Phillips, "Were you conscious when you first read it that it was a major piece?"

"In the beginning she called me and said she had written a piece on camp. I said 'What's camp?" Of course Phillips had heard of kitsch, Clement Greenberg's term, introduced in 1939, in an essay predating Sontag. He had heard of kitsch even before Greenberg. "So," he said, "when Sontag sent her piece, I didn't agree with it, but I thought it was brilliant."

Partisan Review came out of the Eliotic tradition that calls for balancing the vital new with the solid old, balancing tradition against competing new impulses. Some organic self-similarity comes out of the original situation. Certain writers write a piece that leads to a new idea; another writer comes along and takes up the idea; that's organic dialogue. Phillips' memoir of PR is laced with portraits of writers, painters, and intellectuals; and these portraits are, at bottom, descriptions of their thinking process, their form of thinking. He does not analyze their writing style so much as he describes their idiosyncratic characteristics of thinking: bold assertions, sudden associations, anything that particularizes the way a person thinks, as evidenced through their writing or their conversation. Great talkers often make great writers.

Phillips remarks that Mailer was the most divergent talent he ever met. Mailer traversed the abyss between the impoverished world of little magazines and the glamorous world of commercial magazines. That was a contradiction for Phillips. Did that make him suspect Mailer's motives? "No," Phillips said. "I thought Mailer was a wild man, capable of doing anything. He felt slightly crazy.'

Partisan Review didn't give much support to the Beats, though it did publish Ginsberg and Corso in small doses. The magazine, schooled on polished language, did not then comprehend that Ginsberg was a type of Whitman and that Ginsberg's refrains were Whitman's contemporary howl. As a graduate student I didn't really enjoy the insouciant movies of John Waters and his cultivation of bad taste, a strain of contemporary camp that I experienced in the same way I drank water throughout the day, without noticing. Later, Waters appeared on the cover of my own magazine. Older, I could realize that Waters was not dealing with adult themes. He was dealing with issues of late adolescence, the problems of a teenager becoming an adult. At that age, so I thought at the time, I was trying desperately to

be dult. Later when I could see the transmation, it became credible. The point I Take is that PR participated in making acceptable popular culture without betraying modernist principles.

Phillips wonders whether Poirier's piece on the Beatles should be treated like a treatise on T.S. Eliot. As far as I am concerned, I simply accept the value of the critical thinking behind the audacious comparison. As a result of that influence, when I was teaching at Rutgers, I used the Bob Dylan Songbook in a course, considering his lyrics as a way to explore poetry with my students who were only a few years my junior. It's a way of beginning to share a common language already known to the students, then bringing a power of awareness to shine on their natural interest. It's a way of showing you understand and you are a little bi-lingual yourself, and can therefore enter popular culture as readily as any 20-year-old.

Kurzweil, in her continuation of Phillips' legacy, is "searching for middle ground between the right and the left, those who do not speak to each other." Only as one gets older does one diverge to the far ends of oneself. She believes every editor has his or her own magazine and that, as arguments become more intimate, the discriminations get finer and become much more ideological. She said, "You have these two extremes and you don't have anything in the middle. One should have discussions.'

I brought up the idea of community, where an issue may be resolved through discussion, until people are exhausted with talking and start doing. She said we could have a communitv in Provincetown because other issues bind us. "I try to do it, not often, once a year, by having conferences where a group of people of various persuasions, high-level people who wouldn't be able to afford to write for us but who will come to a PR conference because it is established as a serious forum. Writers value that in lieu of what the New Yorker might pay them."

This is why Provincetown Arts cultivated the interview as a form from the beginning. You get the words of the writer, instead of the words of the acolyte. If you send a writer out to write about a first-rate person and the writer is not first rate, then you will not get a first-rate article. The whole problem of how to get high-level material for little money is the art of being an editor who survives.

If Susan Sontag went from being a sequestered thinker to being a hot tip in Time, then she is proof that the little magazine is a great stopping-off place to publish stuff that will later be better understood. Intellectuals are used to dealing with confusion. It used to be that all great writers started publishing in little magazines. That may not be true now. Phillips confirms, "Not true now."

Kurzweil says, "The big magazines immediately snap up a quarter of the people we put on our masthead, in recent years. Maybe two vears later they are gone. They could go to the New Yorker where they will have a lot more visibility. Provincetown Arts suffered such a loss when Jen Liese took off to help edit Artforum in New York. The lesson is that good people benefit from a springboard.

"It's very easy for a magazine to eat up all your time," Kurzweil said. She lives and teaches in New York with Phillips and commutes a few days a week to Boston.

It was pivotal for me to take Phillips' course at Rutgers in the offices of PR, to actually see how an editor functions, to see the stacks of new manuscripts, stacks of the newest books, advance galleys, and to see the box of chocolates that arrived to tempt him. There were nuts in one box of chocolates and Phillips didn't like nuts. Other editors dislike semi-colons. That's all part of having a clear sense of style. At Rutgers I wrote a paper for Phillips on Conrad's Secret Agent describing the comedy of the conversation between the secret agent and the police. Phillips returned the paper and said a few words, one of which was "persuasive." I thought, that's the way an editor judges a piece of writing. I concluded that to persuade meant also to show, to convince, to substantiate, and to make others see.

But logic was not asserted as a primary value in graduate school. Also the casualness of Phillips' class was partly due to being away from the school's main campus. William Barrett's memoir of Partisan Review, The Truants, speaks about the community around the magazine as playing hooky from reality. Attending Phillips small class, I felt like I had encountered Socrates and found him not so smart. Phillips conducted his class outside literary history, in the real world where editors lived. This man, taking time off to teach, was dealing with functioning writers who had a story to tell that could not wait.

As the son of an artist who taught at major universities, I can testify to the conflicts of the creative artist functioning in an academic environment. The worst thing is that the real artist begins to pontificate, telling students all he knows. In fact, the real artist keeps at the edge of his or her anxiety, not knowing exactly their goal, but trusting in a love of the process. In rough moments in the mere two-decade history of Provincetown Arts, I have felt the magazine as a lifeboat, something I must prevent from sinking if, I, the editor, am to survive.

If you look at the history of Partisan Review, you see that three figures are important, besides Phillips: Phillip Rahv, Dwight Macdonald, and Lionel Trilling.

Presently, PR remains the quarterly it has been except for a short interlude as a monthly, occasioned by a financial backer accelerating the magazine's schedule and increasing its circulation. Kurzweil complains, reasonably, that now there are few conversations between people because everyone is too busy to respond to queries. The magazine office at Boston University has a staff of two. They have a budget and an advisory board. Kurzweil, modestly, says she runs the magazine essentially by consulting. She wishes she had more help. She knows there are writers



who are not going to wait for a board to decide about something they offer. If they are very good writers, a good editor wants them. So Kurzweil simply accepts a piece she feels is good. When she's in doubt, she asks Phillips to read it. "And," she says, "if it's something I accept William reads it anyway. Other than that I consult with people who know something specialized about the area. They are not necessarily on the masthead."

An editor can have a relationship with 50 or more writers, engaging one on one with 50 different people. His job is to make sense of the various voices. He proceeds one at a time, saying yes to the writer who is asked or who offers material. Nobody checks with a board about every detail.

Now, Kurzweil said, there are many magazines at every university. MIT has about 50. She reminds me that Phillips and George Plimpton started the Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines in the early '70s. "They decided to have six editors on a panel from what they considered the best magazines. Soon people heard there was money involved, \$50,000 for the first year, not that much. A lot of people wanted to have travel money. The government wanted to stop the program because most of the money went for meetings, not for literature."

Phillips feels his contribution to literature stems from being slightly outside the academy, on the margin of academic respectability. "He is so honest," Kurzweil said, "if he wanted to disagree he would attack you." She doesn't mean that he rants: "But he thinks things through to get to the bottom of it. Sometimes he'll do it by provoking, sometimes by talking. He will not settle for an untruth."

Kurzweil uses the word provoke. Without the provocation, she would not comprehend the valuation of the idea. No feeling matrix would grid the writing. She knows that wealth can be a curse, poor compensation for the kick she gets out of acquiring a really good piece of writing. She drifted into being the editor, arriving with her own values. "Somebody brought me to a party at William's house. He asked me to write something. I was just finishing copy editing my dissertation-it was 1973. Then he asked me if I wanted to read manuscripts. So I did. Then I looked around at his office and it was a mess. \$1500 for an accountant who comes once a year? So I found someone for \$400."

On Broadway

BY PAUL LISICKY

Sidewalk and pigeon You look like a city But you feel like religion to me.

-"New York Tendaberry," Laura Nyro

ASPER SOLDIERS up lower Broadway, vulnerable and fierce as the buildings above our heads. He doesn't care if anyone rolls his eyes. He's not consumed with thoughts of running into one of his patients, or someone from his building, or even his mother, for that matter, who might be in from Manhasset to catch a show. He's walking down the street with his shirt off. Not because he's exerting his power over anyone, not because he's expecting anything returned from another stark, handsome face, but because he wants to feel the world on him: every song, taste, and smell penetrating his tall flexed torso this unseasonably warm November night.

I'm walking beside my friend. Faces surge toward us, casting the occasional glare. Everyone else is fully dressed, in coats, suits, jackets. Why is my brow hot? If shame has a taste, then it's the cheapest wine on the list. It trembles the palate, dries out the mouth, slides down the gullet where it takes up in the stomach and sours, making you want some aspirin.

"Let's head over to Fifth," I offer.

We're stopped at the corner of Astor Place. "I thought you wanted to walk on Broadway."

Who could have known he'd leave the gym like this? His eyes fix on my face. And he sees purple-black shapes moving inside my head. And it pains him that he's embarrassing me. And it pains me that I'm embarrassed for him, and we balance on the curb for second, stranded, before the WALK sign flashes on.

"We're in Manhattan," he says, with a hurt smile. And though I'm not quite sure what he means, and I can't quite ignore those purple-black shapes, I can't help but see that he's part of something larger: just as the sleek black woman with the plaid bag's part of something larger, as is the thin Japanese kid with the absurd blue tassel swaying back and forth from his cap. And we walk on and walk on, past the drunks slumped outside the ATM, the bus to Fresh Meadows puffing out its sprays of exhaust, the salted golden pretzels tied to the sides of a vendor's silver cart absorbing every scent, texture, and cry of anguish.

And yet? And yet?

Ahead, a coffee shop. Pendant lights hang from the ceiling; a white moth hovers above the raspberry pie in the window. Jasper stands with a smile around the edges of his lips, like some enormous, alarming child who's been presented with a tray of cupcakes. "Would you like something?"

"Sure."

"Stay here," he says. "Hold this for me." And he hands me his gym bag full of sneakers and sweatpants and God knows what, so heavy that my shoulder hurts, and I have to put it down on the sidewalk, lest I run out of breath.

I watch him through the frame of the window. No fear that he's not behaving like the rest. No fear that he's going to be asked to leave or put his shirt on. He walks right to the counter, past all the faces he's silenced, the cluster of muscle boys, the NYU student who wants to gaze up at him because he's the most beautiful thing he's ever seen but can't. The girl takes Jasper's order, talking with incredible animation about the tattoos that rope around his shoulder, and all at once I'm reminded of my father, who's walking in and out through the steakhouse in some distant corner of my memory, and filling up the doggy bag with the scraps from peoples' tables for Taffy, our miniature collie. He doesn't care that I'm beside the door with my mother and brothers, arms folded, blushing. He doesn't care that Michael's calling for him to come to the car, or that the couple by the salad bar is so



PAUL LISICKY

perturbed that they've actually stopped eating, holding their knives and forks in stillness above their plates. All he's thinking about is Taffy, how her eyes will gloss over once her bright blue bowl fills up with the meat.

"Drink up," Jasper says, passing me the cup.

"Thanks." And it's bitter and delicious. So weirdly delicious that I imagine he's slipped something inside it, something to keep me nervy, opened to the city and everything beyond in all of its wildness and danger and beauty.

And yet? And yet?

When I look up from my sip, he's gone. Hats bob up and down like inflatable balls on the waves. The street's darker, chillier. Second by second, it's losing its luster. Wind silences the horns. It catches the loose trash on the sidewalk, blowing air into the bags, lifting them up, up above the city before they fall, like emptied paper lanterns. And then I spot him again, soldiering on, defying anything that tries to tell him to cover up. Time's a bullet fired, his walk says. Planes are flying toward us as we speak, germs mixed in distant laboratories. You are the buildings protecting us. You are the boy slamming the sidewalk with his skateboard wheels, the woman with the plaid bag slung over her shoulder, the cold salted pretzels served up night after night by the vendors. The bones groan beneath the layers of Washington Square Park. Be mighty, his walk says. Be struck, pierced by the light on your skin. I spill hot coffee down the front of my shirt.

"Wait!" I say. And I run down the sidewalk after him, trying to catch up.

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Weather Conditions in Lower Manhattan

September 11, 2001-October 2, 2001

BY MIRA SCHOR





HE EVENING of Monday September 10, 2001, rainstorms moved through the New York area from the west. At 7 PM, a brief intensely heavy downpour scoured the streets of Lower Manhattan. Just then, a friend who was delivering my computer and paintings from Provincetown called from her van parked in front of my building. I went downstairs and we stared at each other, me in my lobby, she in her van as torrential sheets of rain kept us from moving. A Yankee game was delayed and finally postponed.

I live in Lower Manhattan, on Lispenard Street, which is one block south of Canal Street, 14 blocks north of the World Trade Center. At about 8:45 AM on the morning of Tuesday, September 11, I was still in bed and had just turned the radio on to WNYC, the NPR affiliate in New York City.

I heard two sounds, some kind of muffled roar and then a thudding crash. This neighborhood is incredibly noisy so it could have been a truck crashing into something on Canal but the noise was notable enough that it crossed my mind that it might be a building collapse in the area. After the interval of time it took for that image to cross my mind, within less than a minute of the sound, an announcer on WNYC yelled that there had been an explosion at the World Trade Center. I rushed into my clothes, grabbed my keys and my camera, ran out the door and got to the corner of Lispenard and Church by about 8:57 AM. This is the corner from which the video, which I would call the "money shot", of the first plane crashing into the building was filmed. In this brief clip you may notice firemen and wonder what they are doing there.

They were investigating the report of a possible gas leak in front of my friend Jack Whitten's house. Jack saw the whole thing from the moment one fireman looked up at the loud noise from the low flying plane. On the tape, after the plane hits, someone says, "Holy Shit."

I stood with neighbors and passersby and we gaped at the black gash, flames and smoke at the top of the building. I felt sure that I could see a person waving a white cloth from a window at the top right corner of the first tower. I could not hear any sirens. Although I know now that even in that brief time emergency vehicles and the mayor were already on the site or speeding toward it, it seemed as if this was happening and no one was doing anything.







PHOTOGRAPHS BY MIRA SCHOR

In the sequence of pictures I took from the moment I reached the corner, between the sixth and the seventh picture there is a gap which represents perhaps twenty seconds, during which an enormous explosion on the left side of the South Tower expanded and engulfed the entire top half of the building in a giant ball of flame before subsiding into flames and smoke. During this time I forgot I had a camera.

We couldn't see the plane from our vantage point and I was stunned when I found out several days later that everyone watching TV at that moment had seen the plane hit the building in real time, "live."

As more people gathered, and people passed us walking uptown, we watched the smoke and fire in both buildings. We all reassured each other that the buildings were built to withstand the impact of a plane. Perhaps because of this belief, I went home to call family and thus I only saw the collapses on TV as I spoke to a friend who was looking from her window on Franklin Street at the debris from the second tower fall towards her. I felt no fear for myself but I had lost all realization that I could go out and see what was happening. I feel deep regret that I didn't see the collapses with my own eyes no matter how nightmarish because it seems like it would help me understand the reality.

About 40 minutes after the collapses, knowing the city was being closed down, I decided to go out to get food and cash. It was a beautiful day in New York City, clear, mild and dry, the kind of day when the postcard pictures are taken and when the air is most pleasantly compatible with the inner temperature of the human body. Where the Towers had stood the sky was a gorgeous blue with just a low movement of the ochre/gray dust toward Brooklyn. Completely surreal, unreal,

A few blocks north at the Gourmet Garage people were beginning to arrive to buy as much food as they could carry. One lady was standing with a small container of raspberries and one other small item. I said to her, "Lady, you're not really prepared for an emergency are you?" She said, "Oh, my husband will be back from New Jersey later." Exit and access to the city had already been blocked off. I said, "Your husband isn't coming back from New Jersey tonight." Now that sounded like an emergency to her.

On the street in Soho, I dodged slightly when I heard a fighter jet above, and looking up I also saw, silent and silvery, very high up in the sky, perhaps on its way to Canada, probably one of the last jets to fly over New York for days.

At the corner of Spring and Broadway, the streets already emptied of all traffic, a guy had pulled over his SUV and turned his radio up. A crowd of about 30 people listened. In the midst of all the confusion, a lady took the time to warn me that my bag was open. I took pictures. In one picture, a tall large man stands apart, looking back downtown. His suit is covered with ash. I realize that no one spoke to him.

I returned home against the moving tide of people walking uptown, some wet from sprinkler systems, some covered with dust, some intact, all calm and quiet, and I prepared to hunker down.

I went out again at dusk: on Broadway the sunset was backlighting the cloud of dust and the Woolworth Building with a glowing pink. At the corner of Church and White the temperature suddenly rose about 10 degrees. The closest I could get was a barricade on Franklin and West Broadway. A few blocks down the vista narrowed and it looked as if the world ended there in a dark grey cloud.

That night was very scary. Cable TV went out at 7 PM (for the next three days, paradoxically, during major media coverage of a real story that for once affected me directly, I only had access to the local CBS affiliate and grainy BBC coverage on an old black and white TV). The neighborhood was deserted. We were 20 blocks south from the line of demarcation above which some sort of normal city life apparently continued.

We feared another building collapse or gas explosion. I packed a small bag with absolute necessities: passport, wallet, money, flashlight, the little of my mother's jewelry that I have with me, zip drive of my computer files, medication, my keys. What else could I take? I grabbed the negatives of my time at Bellagio as a memory of great beauty. I looked around my studio at my work but realized the futility of taking even an album of slides with me. I placed slip-on shoes near my bed and lav down half dressed: I wore a T-shirt and panties and left a pair of pants at the door near the bag, figuring that I could always put them on in the street!

THE NEXT DAY, I found my street behind police barricades. There was no traffic for miles.

After hearing it was open, my neighbor Olga and I wouldred as far as the Gourmet Garage. I box or flowers: freesia for scent and yellowcer and sunflowers for joyful color. The wind charged direction on Wednesday around noon and terrible acrid smoke filled my loft, especially my small bedroom that second night.

THURSDAY I was desperate for the New York Times and walked up towards I4TH Street, which was the line of demarcation. In 1950s movies, the aftermath of WWIII might be indo cated by a vacant Wall Street filmed at 5 AV In a Sunday morning. That's what the stacts of Soho looked like. You could have she a cannon down Grand Street and laid down to sleep in the middle of Broadway. As I was looking south, the sky was white with smoke. At every major cross street there were police checkpoints. In the Village there was a slightly greater sense of peacefulness although very few food stores were open, no cars and few people.

Suddenly at 14TH Street there was a Hollywood version of a New York traffic jam, with buses, cars, and emergency vehicles, and sidewalks crowded with people. I was afraid to cross to the other side, for fear I would not be able to get back home, so I doubled back through the East Village, empty except for a few restaurants with people sitting out and eating: the air was hot and increasingly heavy with the acrid smell of smoke. At Astor Place a news vendor had a few NY Times salted away behind a crate. I stopped at Dean and Delucca on the way and enjoyed an ice coffee and the beauty of a row of some kind of red bottled liquid arrayed in a row on an upper shelf illuminated by the bright lighting in the store. I asked workers there to wet a paper napkin to cover my face so that I could breathe as I walked the final blocks home. I cleaned my house, washing the bedroom, changing the smoky sheets and putting a fan in it. That night another intense rainstorm befell the city, thunder and enormous lightning bolts humbling the scale of the city. If ever a rainstorm could be said to be apocalyptic, this was the one.

FRIDAY Susan came back downtown. On Tuesday she had been on the subway going down to her studio on Canal Street. The train moved at a crawl and the conductor only said that the delay was due to "police action at Cortland Street." She had no idea of any of the things that had already happened when she finally got out shortly before IO AM and found herself in a crowd of people looking at the towers burning. Just then the South Tower fell.

We had lunch at Lupe's. I had felt nauseous but ate ravenously when the food was put in front of me. I walked to the Village through light rain, again to get the paper, which this day I found a bit closer, at 811 Street. At Washington Square one of the many impromptu memorial walls had sprung up with flowers, candles, letters, and signs for the missing. Through the arch looking north I could see the Empire State Building's elegant needle to the sky; to the south, only a great gap where the Towers once had been my beacons homewards.

SATURDAY, the line of demarcation came down from 14TH to Canal Street bringing with it a great human circus. I met Susanna for lunch and more friends joined us on their way down to volunteer with the Salvation Army. There was a crazy looseness to such impromptu socializing in a city where everything is always planned far ahead and friends no longer even speak on the phone but, rather, just thinking of someone qualifies as a visit. The streets were crowded with flotillas of work vehicles and spectators finally able to come closer to where it had happened. In sci-fi movies there is always a moment when the monster/flying saucer is destroyed and people gradually come out from hiding to look at the mangled and smoking remains/wreckage. If they stare in awed silence, security and order have returned to the world and it is the end of the movie. If chaos and revelry ensues, more havoc is yet to come.

Canal Street's circus included both elements. People who finally could get closer to the disaster crowded at places with a clear view downtown to stare somberly while a marching band of black students from Oakwood College in Huntsville Alabama marched east on Canal continuously playing the "Star Spangled Banner" and the "Battle Hymn of the Republic." The melodies and the physical vibration of the drums made my neighbor and me cry briefly. This was good since in general I felt like I had suffered an emotional lobotomy. But there were also people in funny hats hoping to get on television.

I walked downtown eventually getting as far as Reade Street. In the frozen zone, the streets were silent and deserted, except for emergency vehicles, trucks filled with debris, Verizon and



Con Edison trucks, and the occasional temporary deposits of completely destroyed cars. I now know what steel-thread tires are, because often the threads were all that had survived in the wheel casing. The closer you got the eerier it was, because there was nothing to see but a few smoldering jagged ruins enveloped in dark smoke.

But the beautiful cast iron buildings of Tribeca were remarkably intact. The streets and the buildings had been washed down not just by Thursday night's rain but by Department of Sanitation trucks so that they sparkled. At the corner of Hudson and Duane lovely old Dutch style buildings' clean windows caught the light of the clearing late afternoon and glistened like a street in a Vermeer painting. But a block south were the National Guard, Salvation Army disaster relief trucks and storefronts, police, temporary above ground cables snaking along the gutters.

The site is said to be indescribably enormous and terrible, the TV miniaturizes it. The relief work is incredible-the people who run New York turn out to know what they are doing. People in the neighborhood also speak of girders covered with blood and workers vomiting on the site. One artist went to his roof after the first plane crashed and found it covered in blood, fragmented flesh, debris and paper. I repeat these things not to exploit their horror, but because this repetition is part of what it means to be a New Yorker now. We always have to be experts, so now we are experts on the details of horror: What seems ghoulish relish is really one of the myriad ways in which we are trying to get a grip on understanding what happened.

In those first few days, my neighbors and I felt very isolated from the rest of the city. We felt fortunate that we had power and water, relatively unaffected phone service and that we were able to stay in our homes unlike many of our friends a few blocks closer. And somehow it felt right to be close to "ground zero," in an abnormal place.

When I was at Bellagio in June, our comings and goings from the Shangri-La in the hill through the ornate cast-iron gate was the cause of envy and curiosity. Now my photo ID gave me a new privilege, of being an inhabitant of the zone nearest hell. And it felt like a privilege to be here. I even have a strange longing for those first few days when we had the sense, disturbing yet comforting, that we were the last people on earth. We were alone, yet we were together. We felt a tremendous solidarity with our neighbors and our neighborhood. In fact, in a neighborhood besieged by millionaires, the only people around seemed to be a very few of the longest time artist residents.

I ran into Nancy Davidson and her husband Greg just as they came out of their place on Duane Street. Nancy had a show up at Miller Gallery. The opening had been scheduled for September 11. They had been home during the crashes and collapses six blocks away and stayed in their loft, though without power and phone (but with water and gas).

They stayed because they were afraid that if

LEFT: FALLING TRACE & ITS TWIN, 2001, OPPOSITE PAGE JOY (FOR NOMI), 2002

they left, their landlord, who has been trying to get rid of them, would take the opportunity to claim the building was structurally damaged so that they could never return and he could gut the building for luxury lofts. Near such devastation, I could only wonder, who else but artists would choose to live in such difficult physical circumstances?

Many of us have lived here for over 20 years, with the towers looming above us as a constant, familiar, and beautiful presence. Do I exaggerate? After all now I can't even remember where they were and from where I could see them. But they were, from far at any rate, as glorious as Chartres Cathedral, in that verticality represents the essence of humankind's desire for transcendence from "this mortal coil," so that their destruction not only represents unimaginable loss of life, but also the very murder of this human desire to defy gravity and the contingency of flesh.

I did not see my students for more than a week. What would I say to them about the repercussions of this event on artwork, because that is what we do and will go on doing. Perhaps irony will not look like such an easy option now. What we saw "with our own yes" looked like a movie, we couldn't believe what we saw, and we don't believe anything we didn't see with our own eyes, so what is the nature of the image?

The event was marked by the usage of new methods of communications — cell-phone calls from the victims, video recorders and cameras all over the area. On the other hand, the primacy of the real, of flesh: the victims' families listing their birthmarks, what they were wearing, being asked to bring tooth and hair brushes for DNA samples, the sheer mass of matter that must be removed by hand to rescue anyone and to clean that immense space. Yet just because one saw terrible things, doesn't mean that these have to enter artists' work literally. In Iran listening to Britney Spears might constitute rebellion. Here some of my friend's sought relief in Marx Brothers' movies. I was first able to feel human compassion when on Sunday I lay down and listened to my favorite record of Dinu Lipatti playing Chopin Valses, so you never know where the political really resides in art.

That being said, the first Sunday I did a 14foot high drawing of the letters that make up the word trace, destroyed, burnt, deconstructed, falling. It needed its twin, which I finished a few days later, making it a bit shorter than the first, as the South Tower was to the North. My ceiling is only nine and a half feet high so the paper spills onto the floor.

HURRICANE BOB cut a path across Cape Cod on August 19, 1991. It was composed primarily of dry high wind that drove salt spray from the bay and ocean onto the summer vegetation. By the next day everything green had died. For the rest of that summer, one's footsteps crackled on autumnal dead leaves in hot bright heat unrelieved and unfiltered by what would have been the cooling shadow of richly leafed trees in the ordinary August.

If this weren't depressing enough, the storm



had disturbed beehives, wasps' nests, and yellow jackets from miles around. They buzzed angrily, not only in the streets and gardens but even on the beach, where they hovered over a vast expanse of foul smelling seaweed. These homeless angry bees came to my mind after September 11TH. In the '80s we had become accustomed to street people-such as Barbara the bag lady who haunted the phone building at Church and Lispenard, and howled deprecations in Polish through the night outside my bedroom window-but this crazy cast of characters had disappeared many years ago.

On Duane Street, near the National Guard encampment, I passed such a young man, tall, handsome with curly short dreadlocks, in shorts, dust covered, barefoot. If his mind was lost within itself before, imagine what it might be like to be barefoot, homeless, and crazy five blocks from a sudden Holocaust in streets now occupied by men with guns.

EVERY ONE of us is a maddened bee. The commonplace complaint is that we can't concentrate. That isn't exactly true, we are concentrating "like mad," constantly replaying in our heads what happened, what we saw. It is all we can talk about; every conversation overheard in the street is about it. It is exciting, in the truest sense of being pushed from being somnolent to being awake.

Each person's buzz is a reflection of who they are anyway. So the ecologist wants a gas mask, the fashion plate wants one that fits—as if those kinds of preparations could help: despite my carefully prepared emergency bag, a few nights after September 11 I heard a constant loud noise outside at night and ran out to the stairwell ... in my socks. Nancy B. volunteered with the Salvation Army the 14TH and 15TH and made her way to near ground zero where she handed out hamburgers to rescuers for hours. She says she just wanted to see what she could see but I think it is her Mother Teresa side.

My sister is angered by the stream of e-mails from fellow academics taking the Chomsky and Sontag line of anti-Zionism and anti-Americanism. Sontag's piece in the New Yorker seemed rather hard and arrogant in tone even if it said some true things. I guess it was her job and her madness to not give in to the temptation of sentimentality but at what point does she imagine that she is not part of enlightenment philosophy? But all of us are just bargaining with, for want of a better word, God, trying to make sense of horror and assuage shock whether by action, madness, or finger pointing at the victims.

My madness is that I think I can interpret the buzz of the other bees, but don't see my own symptoms (if you don't count insomnia, nightmares, and teeth so tightly clenched I practically have to pry open my mouth with my hands).

Monday the I7TH I went uptown to see my mother. It was the first time I had strayed north of I4TH street, first time on the subway. I thought I was calm, "normal" but her neighborhood was "normal" enough to make me realize how crazed I really was. The crowds at Zabar's shopping for the holidays made me scream with impatience. The subway ride up had been quick and simple but the ride back down was terribly tense, the old A train was very crowded but when we slowed down every few minutes in some tunnel or other the car was silent except for the babbling of toddlers. At West 4TH Street it was announced that the train was going to be diverted so I had to walk home from the Village with my groceries. The conditions in my neighborhood were intense, police barricades, the rescue effort vehicles, the epic scaled recovery and repair work, the smoke. God knows what we were breathing, but I found the Upper West Side's relative normality disturbing.

I read once that people who lose their parents as children always have a certain attitude called "and suddenly." This affected my first reactions. I couldn't believe what I was seeing, but there was also a sense of inevitability as the Towers exploded. Believe me, that my parents were refugees and had fled Paris and then Europe with only the clothes on their back and their lives and the fact that they had lost all their families, and the fact that my father then died when I was 11, has not made me embrace change but rather has caused me to cling to stability: I have particularly staked a lot on living out my life in New York City, in Manhattan, where my parents found welcome, where I was born and which I love deeply. At the same time shocking loss seems familiar.

ON THE SECOND WEDNESDAY, I finally felt that I could turn off my air conditioner and open the window only to be woken in the middle of the night by another wave of sickening, frightening acrid smoke permeating the loft. The WTC site is still smoldering but as the smoke subsides, the hole in the skyline gets bigger. Friday September 28 the sky was marked by enormous cumulus clouds that, like the lightning of the night of the 13TH, dwarf the city reminding its citizens that we exist on a planet. The visibility was great. From every corner from here to midtown I look downtown and think, could I have seen them from here? It is the opposite of the phenomenon of the missing limb, amputated but still sending messages to the brain of its existence. Here we cannot replace or recall its enormous dimension. They are gone. At night, klieg lights mark the spot and the plume of smoke is still as tall as the average high-rise.

I have been down near the site a few times. I could see the great standing ruin of the South

Tower I miticent trace of modernism, Mone Boogie Woogie meets Smithson's "Mo ents of Passaic, New Jersey," the grid After looking for awhile a friend said, Mrs something else." And that is exactly it, you see something, but what you see bears no relationship to what was. You think, if I get closer, if I get on top of it, maybe then I will understand and yet even what I did see I couldn't understand. I constantly come back to the first moments at my corner. My amazement begins even earlier, with something unbelievably sing ple: that I had understood that something significant had happened and got from bed to street so uncharacteristically fast is as much a subject of wonderment for me as anything . Se that happened that day. I was completely disconnected from the human reality of what I was seeing: just, "Look at that big hole in the building." Many were already dead but that hundreds of people were no longer even physically there did not penetrate my consciousness. I see myself standing on the street seeing the giant fireball. Even as I stood there, I saw myself standing there, with utter detachment. Something amazing was happening and my mind was a perfect blank.

The art world has begun to stir. Susanna, Nancy and I met at Nancy Davidson's opening on the 28th, where we would have all met on September 11. Everyone there was very happy to see each other. As for many of us, it was the first time I was out in the city after dark, other than standing at Lispenard and Church. We had a nice dinner, although all we talked about was it, from every angle of conversation possible. At about 10 PM as we crossed Ninth Avenue at 23RD we heard sirens. A motorcade approached as if for a visiting dignitary: an unmarked black police car with red lights flashing on its roof stopped downtown traffic in mid-intersection. Three motorcycle cops, then at least six more passed, preceding an ambulance, which was followed by a state police car and a NYPD police car. When they find the body of a policeman or fireman, they give the ambulance trip to the morgue an honor guard of three motorcycles so this seemed even bigger and yet it wasn't even anything that would ever be on the news.

Today October 2 it is three weeks since "the attack," "the incident," "the bombing," "the unfortunate activities in Lower Manhattan," "the catastrophe," "the tragic events of September 11, 2001, "Nine one one," "Nine eleven." I measure time by The Tuesday, The First Wednesday, The Second Saturday.

CODA (May 2002): "In the years to come." This is the irritating narrative device used by the writers of the American Experience programs on PBS this season including their history of New York City. It gives the narrator an omniscient vet melancholic tone. Using this device one can place oneself at the maugural of the memorials that will inevitably be built at the site-in all likelihood safe and unimaginative. Or one can imagine vet a further moment, "in the years to come the destruction of the World Trade Center became a distant memory, as the people of New

York adjusted to the new streets and buildings that replaced the behemoths that once had anchored the great skyline of New York."

The weather continued balmy. Part of a pattern of drought afflicting the Northeast but a blessing for those of us for whom the cold wet winds of fall would have been one more unbearable misery

On October 11, I saw a man cry on the subww. A handsome dark-skinned man in workers' overalls got on the downtown IRT. He was sobbing uncontrollably but silently, ineffectually dabbing at his face now and then with a handkerchief. He was crying like I've often seen women cry in public places but I had never before seen a man cry in public. He cried even as he got off the train.

One began to have to avoid the staggering lurch of inebriated men in the street early in the day. Homeless and disturbed men returned to the streets in the greatest numbers since the early 80s, making it difficult to stop in the street to talk to a friend without being accosted. The National Guard, city and state police stationed at either end of Lispenard were removed one night in early January. "In the weeks to come" violent random street crime made its return to Lower Manhattan, with rapes and shootings in the Village and around Houston and Canal

On October 31 the burning smell returned one last time. Then the fires that, according to the Fire Commissioner had burned "hot red," were finally out. A few days later the Red Cross made vouchers for air filters more widely available to neighborhood residents. In February scientists revealed that until the fires subsided at the end of October, we had been breathing "unprecedented levels of pollutants" . . . "higher even than levels found in Kuwait after its oil wells were torched during the Gulf War." The terrible poisonous smell would emerge late at night, a nocturnal miasma apparently propelled by miniclimactic air currents that shift throughout the day and night in the streets of the city.

On the weekend after Thanksgiving Day I stretched some new canvases and got ready to paint. On November 25TH, yet another warm day, I took a rapturous walk down Fifth Avenue from 53RD to Soho. The strangely empty city was beautiful in a timeless and mystical way. At the northwest corner of Madison Square I was alone with an early evening cobalt blue sky and the glorious lit golden roof of the Met Life Building and the prow of the Flatiron Building ahead. My beloved city was still there. I felt I could begin to get back to work.

"AND SUDDENLY" on November 30th, my sister Naomi Schor suffered a massive cerebral hemorrhage. She died December 2ND. Her funeral at Swann Point Cemetery in Providence was on December 5TH, a day as beautiful and nearly as warm as September 11, astonishingly mild and clear. Thus the most beautiful days now always carry for me both the threat of total reversal of human fortune and of the poignancy of the profound discordance between human

emotions and natural phenomena.

People's expressions of sympathy to me have often included a comment on what a terrible year I'd had, first September 11, then my sister's death, but I steadfastly have refused to see the two losses as related or equal. One had not happened to me, the other had. And yet the two do exist in a curious tandem. For example I feel some comfort in the knowledge that others are grieving a sudden loss.

I know from losing my father as a child, that the Towers which loomed larger the further one got from them, personal loss grows in time rather than diminishes. Yet there are differences: the Towers were in one place and several times everyday I find myself walking downtown and doing the strange mental work of trying to reconstruct where they were, how big they were, using landmarks such as the Western Union building over which the first plane flew to assist me. I have a body memory; but you can't see what isn't there. My sister did not occupy one fixed place, she permeated my whole life and thus I don't need to consciously resurrect her image, she is as the left side of my body.

If September 11 rocked my sense of security in the city of my birth and temporarily knocked me off my creative track, who I will be and what my art can be after my sister's death is a much more complex question. I have only done two paintings since September 11, of the word joy painted in the most contingent of colors, shit brown and scrapped flesh. This dark painterly embodiment of joy has been my first means of re-entry back into artmaking after the loss of such a primal figure in my life.

A LAST THOUGHT . . . FOR THE MOMENT:

Yesterday, walking in the Village, just as I was wondering if many people had already forgotten, three young people passed by, a guy in a flashy robin's egg blue suit carrying a boom box, a guy with a film camera, a girl following along. Suddenly the guy in the blue suit put the box down and broke out into a perfect Mick Jagger imitation complete with jerky dance movements on the lawn in front of the Picasso sculpture at the NYU houses on LaGuardia Place!

The annual phenomenon of NYU film students fanning out in the Village to work on their Spring projects!

The divine silliness of the moment served to reinforce my suspicion that for many people the Titanic-like disaster was just a blip on the screen of their youth, and that only those already immersed in loss in their own lives and histories would keep this terrible memory in their hearts. And perhaps that inexorably forgetful energy of youth is the truly necessary movement forward of joy.

MIRA SCHOR is a painter and writer living in New York and Provincetown. Her work and that of ber parents Ilya and Resia are currently included in Family at the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art. An interview with her, "Eye to Eye: Mira Schor + Bradley Rubenstein" can be accessed on artkrusb.com

Women Who Write the World

eorge W. Bush can love God and his country, but goodbye to all that-I love a good conspiracy theory. And I like to think most writers do. We're all spies in this life, after all-tracking interior and exterior landscapes for clues, and telling anybody who'll listen what we've found. The chain of events that culminated in the nightmare that was September 11TH and its war-rallying aftermath has more conspiracy in it than anything that has happened in America since the Kennedy assassination or-don't even go back that far-Bush's presidential election, which was an event so botched that it ranked about even with the OJ Simpson trial as a travesty of American justice and, in its aftermath, evoked a national disillusionment of what we think is really true.

After two planes pornographically crashed into the World Trade Towers, the American public was told within 48 hours who was responsible and which country we would be going to war with. Everybody seemed to blithely go along with it, as though we'd been too long without a war-summering on headlines that were more gossip than real news: Shark Attacks Boy in Florida; Chandra Levy Vanishes.

We were a country isolated from the rest of geography-inventing, instead of really knowing what was most important about living in a world that was hungry and broke. The media was making news out of our own loneliness. And then, on September 11TH, news out of our shock and grief. How could this have happened to us? All those headlines seemed to be saying to each other. How could this not have happened to us? Bush had everybody believing this so-called war on terrorism was a real war because the national grief was so quickly manipulated to support it-all without an actual enemy country or an act of Congress to officially declare it. Those four hijacked planes knocked me out of the personal and I found that, because I am a mostly autobiographical writer, I could no longer talk about myself the way I had been talking about myself in writing because downtown Manhattan on fire suddenly became the only subject-smaller, more concrete, more dangerous and supernaturally close. I had become a journalist facing a story with no tangible evidence except disaster; mentally taking notes because I was unable to come up with an appropriate artistic response originating anywhere near the devastation's effect or repercussion of a crisis. I went numb; I went factual. I wanted to know the world more than feel the world if it was capable of turning so tenuously like this.

I turned hysterically political (I am not a political person) and came down with BNS-Breaking News Syndrome-going against my innate distrust of the media to the absurd point of not getting enough of it; scanning the television and cyberspace for what was really happening, because what I had seen through a window on the 45TH floor of a midtown office building somewhere around 10:00 in the morning-two towers collapsed in apocalyptic silence-couldn't be what was really happening. The world seemed to have become a junkie, looking for fix. I was looking for the conspiracy angle to give the unimaginable a context, flexing a readingthe-world muscle, while the writing-the-world muscle was still looking for the subject that could actually contain and then reflect something this full strength.

The conspiracy angle is, of course, a fool's proximity—tilting the truth away from the sight of what makes it true. But, it's a natural on the world stage today because it provides the ordinary citizen with a personal involvement in the impersonal, i.e., governmental predicament or cataclysmic eventshocking, political, apocalyptic-borne already beyond anyone's control without having to reach its full uncontrollable self. Conspiracy is a way of getting involved in world policy when we are-especially intellectuals and artists in this country-never involved in world policy. Because there is mainly hegemony firing up American politics, we are left in the huge wake and metronome-sound of policy-making rhetoric. Too much of it. Particularly now-from an American president who is unable to articulate an original idea, no matter how many people compare him, wrong-headedly, to Winston Churchill. The first address Bush gave Congress after September 11TH was a drum roll of war mongering, not the chamber music of statesmanship. His language of no ideas (it's all about taking action without considering the consequence) is being perceived as articulation, which is dangerous for language and dangerous for us. When he describes his war on terrorism as a battle between good and evil, he is at his imperialistic best. Since when has America-the largest corporate sponsor of terrorism in the world-been able to discern the difference?

Bush sounds, too much of the time, like someone who is visibly shaken when having to rise to an occasion and his language is cadenced by a childish rhythm of a man who's been bullied, not influenced, by his own time to such a degree that he's put the country on the offense. When he was elected, his sense of foreign policy was cloudy, at best. In his previous capacity of only running Texas and not the world, Bush ordered enough deaths by electrocution to make the South go dark with violence over reason. And now, he exports that violence. And now, the world is inhuman with violence. In my subconscious search for the best language to describe the violent world here and in Afghanistan, I heard Sebastian Junger say something at a reading recently that has stayed with me for weeks. Junger has been reporting from Afghanistan for ABC News-an assignment somewhat unsuited to him because of his almost anti-celebrity demeanor, which, oddly enough, makes his

appearance much more interesting. You listen to June: because you can't quite believe you are lister g to him. Like the great war corresponden. Ernie Pyle, he's no mouthpiece. He reports the news as it's happening in the world and to him. His getting at the story is all wrapped up in his personally getting in touch with what makes that thing an event in his own life.

Junger was talking about being holed up in a house in Kandahar with a bunch of other journalists during a particularly heavy bombing mission some 20 miles away. Their house had been shelled weeks before by Ame can bombs and all of the glass in the winders had been replaced by sheets of plastic that were bil-

lowing in and out from the force of that mission, miles away. In a moment of sudden recognition about how everything had changed, Sebastian described the billowing windows as "the world trying to catch its breath.'

If the world were trying to catch its breath, one would only hope that America's foreign policy might be forced to lie down upon the examination table. As a nation, we are still very much acting the way we have always acted-stomping around the world like an elephant, inflicting pain and suffering and calling it freedom fighting. But freedom is a state of mind, not the spoils of war, and somewhere along the road to possible oblivion, rhetoric and real truth have blurred into a kind of nationalistic push to continue to go out and buy stuff-instructions delivered in the all-business manner of a traffic cop: Nothing to see here, move along-anything but sit down and actually think about what a war means and why we have to cooperate with it. An American life, so they've been telling us, if you're really listening, is literally more valuable than, say, an Afghani life.

And that one act on a crystal clear blue day in New York City and Washington was enough to defend those valuable lives-by getting this country into a war with Afghanistan so fast and, to use a Bush-ism with such resolve that any

mourning and shock over people dead in the towers was turned inside out as blood-lust for retaliation before the first body was ever carried out of the World Trade Center. Here's something from one of the more interesting conspiracy-theory websites-addressed ominously enough, whatreallyhappened.com:

"Sun Tzu, in The Art Of War, writes that all war is based on deception. The people of an invading nation have to be deceived into thinking that they act in their own selfdefense; that they are the ones to have been attacked. The United States government has a long history of using such deceptions to start wars, from claiming that the USS Maine, sunk by a coal-bin fire, was sunk by a Spanish mine, to the Gulf Of Tonkin and the torpedoes that never were, to Operation Northwoods, in which the Joint Chiefs planned to stage fake

terror attacks to manufacture American support for a war against Cuba.

"Once a government resorts to terrorizing its own population to control them, it must keep doing so, out of fear that a population no longer afraid will start to think clearly about what is going on. Terror has to become legal."

I don't know about you, but when I read something like that, I find conspiracy to be a lot more plausible than anything the government or even some forms of human bandwagoning (patriotism, jingoism) can ever say about what's up. While everybody was reassessing the relationships they were in and if love or infatuation measured up against mid-



PORTRAIT OF MICHAEL KLEIN FROM BAD BEHAVIOR, BILL HAYWARD

September's so violently lit reminder about the fragility of life, I was jones-ing on conspiracy. I couldn't get enough of looking through the window of conspiracy to see what Islam, terrorism, oil, Bush and September 11TH had to do with each other.

I went to hear Karen Armstrong, author of The History of God, speak about Islam and the whacked out behavior of 19 alleged terrorists on the night that came before martyrdom—drinking in topless joints. Very non-devout behavior, Armstrong said, which for her, discounted them as extreme fundamentalists. I joined an anti-war group the playwright Eve Ensler put together and heard women from RAWA-Afghani radicals who refused the burka and taught girls in secret classrooms. I read every conspiracy report I could find: It's all about America's lust for the five generations worth of

oil in the Caspian Sea; those planes were actually remote controlled; Osama bin Laden had plastic surgery two years ago; Osama bin Laden met with an American official a few months before the attack in a hospital, over a dialysis machine; Israel was responsible for what happened on September 11; Arabs and Pakistanis who worked in the World Trade Center were told to stay home on September 11.

Conspiracy is stranger than the truth or it's the truth you don't really want to believe. It's an ache in the muscle—a variation, but also an original so that any rhetoric is overshadowed by active imagining-putting an idea behind the thing. Instead of rhetoric—the perceived-to-be

tonic of facts that loses its effervescence over time-conspiracy releases conjecture. And, there's nothing wrong with conjecture, except that it's never quite dull enough to be the truth.

Because conspiracy is a kind of fiction, it is a driving force behind the art of making a sentence of fiction or other kinds of writing. Writers, to quote Patricia Hampl, "make something up to see if it's true," and while she is referring to the memoirist here, I think it can be said that most writers are actively engaged in a conspiracy-albeit, a milder one than, say the political kind-but a conspiracy nonetheless about something moving behind the world we can't quite see. A writer's life is always moving in this direction.

Writers, like conspirators, state their case in a way that edges out absolute truth by holding it under what is possible. Every good writer is giving us a world that we are very close to, though never completely, living in-like a book's mission to carry us into a dream, every conspiracy theory feels delivered to us from an

altered state of consciousness.

The way we live in what we read and write and dream often strikes us with something called being influenced. A piece of writing (and none, I don't think, more persuasive than a great journalist's essay) can change your life, the way you think, or (when the writer is really doing their job), what you thought was important. One fact of reading that has become increasingly clear to me after years of reading is that many women writers, have accessed the world of possibility more than as many male writers have. Grace Paley wrote, "It is the responsibility of the male poet to be a woman." So, I aspire to be a woman writer-like other male woman writers before me: James Baldwin, William Maxwell, Nazim Hikmet, Tomas Transtrommer, John Cheever, and Tennessee Williams, to name a few.

I don't mean to be sexist here, but revisionist. A woman writer isn't a biological inevitability (there are, of course, bad women writers who are women), but, as I said, an aspiration—and one that, for me, goes beyond writing. I also aspire to be a man who acts like a woman—not like a drag queen, I'm too hairy—like someone who allows himself to go all the way through grief and value his own vulnerability as an ecstatic moment, rather than as a hole through life. It seems to me that men have electrified history to the point that it has made terrorists out of them. How many woman terrorists do you know—aside from Madeline Albright?

I have been forced-like most of us-to listen to men my whole American life, but the majority of my reading has always been writing by women or by men who are women. Especially now. Here's Jeanette Winterson, writing for the great British newspaper, The Guardian, from a piece called "Life on Planet Earth": "When are we going to take responsibility for the way we live? I can hardly believe that we are back into those '70s feminist debates about women, nature, the Earth, life, nurturing and continuity, versus men who have no respect for the natural world, and see it as they see the female body, as something imperfect, approximate and in need of a helping hand from science.

"Everywhere I look, men are talking about nuclear capacity, about germ warfare, about dedicating 50 years to wipe out terrorism. The Bush administration is delighted not to have to worry about tedious environmentalists and Kyoto protocols and World Trade protesters. This is a war—and the 'big trousers' are back in charge.

"I am beginning to think that the lunatics have taken over the asylum. I don't want to be genetically engineered so that I can survive war by living in a space pod. I want to live here, on Earth, the place I call home. I want it to be a safe, beautiful place to bring up children and teach them to love life and to value it. How can I do this when our leaders are treating Earth like a hotel bedroom—trash it and move on."

Not surprisingly, it has been women writers who have been writing about September 11TH with more grace and understanding and fierceness than anything I have read by a man writing as a man. Aside from Jeanette Winterson and Susan Sontag (who got a ridiculous amount of flak for writing the truth about American foreign policy for the New Yorker)-the single most important piece to emerge about the events of September 11TH has been by Arundhati Roy, a writer from India and author of the novel The God of Small Things. She says in her essay "The Algebra of Infinite Justice": "But who is Osama bin Laden really? Let me rephrase that. What is Osama bin Laden? He's America's family secret. He is the American president's dark doppelganger. The savage twin of all that purports to be beautiful and civilized. He has been sculpted from the spare rib of a world laid to waste by America's foreign policy: its gunboat diplomacy, its nuclear arsenal, its vulgarly stated policy of 'full-spectrum dominance,' its barbarous military interventions, its support for despotic and dictatorial regimes, its merciless economic agenda that has munched through the economies of poor countries like a cloud of locusts. Its marauding multinationals who are taking over the air we breathe, the ground we stand on, the water we drink, the thoughts we think. Now that the family secret has been spilled, the twins are blurring into one another and gradually becoming interchangeable."

So, Osama bin Laden is a symptom—a bogeyman George W. Bush and Tommy Franks and Donald Rumsfeld and Condoleeza Rice and Colin Powell are chasing in order to justify a political agenda that is involved, in part, with making sure oil keeps flowing into this country. Conspiratorial or not, the world fills up with blood so our tanks can be filled up with gas.

We drive to the mall instead of watching the government. And the Government has used September 11TH beneficently to support—in case you haven't been watching—the chiseling away of civil liberties, a walk away from the ABM Treaty, the detention of hundreds of people who aren't even remotely connected to September 11TH, and the patent condemnation of any form of dissent. "You're either with us, or you're with the terrorists"—Bush threatened anyone who wouldn't join his self-termed coalition—but, really, he was talking to Americans who are anti-war, as well.

Bush isn't the only one unwilling to even consider the opposing view. The media doesn't like it much either. ABC Nightline anchor Ted Koppel introduced Arundhati Roy during a segment with cartoonist Aaron McGruder and a group of Arab students—all people in opposition to current policy—with this warning to the audience: "Some of you may not like what we are about to broadcast. My advice to you is that you don't have to listen." Shame on him—you do have to listen, why in God's name wouldn't you want to listen to somebody who might, God forbid, have a different viewpoint than yours? What country is this?

Publishing doesn't like the opposition, either. Gore Vidal's new book, "The End of Liberty"—four essays on American domestic and foreign policy—is only available in Italian and doesn't have any American publisher interest whatsoever. HarperCollins declined to release Michael Moore's new book, *Stupid White Men and Other Excuses for the State of the Nation*, because, it says, "it's a matter of publishing a book about the world situation when the world situation has changed."

Thank God people *are* writing in opposition. The artistic hope is that more people keep writing dangerous books and avoid trade houses altogether and go to small presses, where the corporate view of success doesn't hold. Big American business is the real culprit in the mess that is geo-politics, after all, and has made it so the world is now—now that we, a super-power, have been attacked—*officially* dangerous. The real plot of that danger is the horrifying equation of who eats and who

starves to death. The war on terrorism is, in effect, a strategy to make sure the satiated still rule over the dispossessed. Instead of using September 11TH as a bridge to understanding the world Americans don't live in, we are making sure we use enough bombs this time to finish off the bridge for good.

How to respond to the world now? The broken open world? How to respond as an artist, as a human being? You become a visionary. Here's something another woman writer—well, not quite a woman—a fourth grader in Houston named Carmen Penny wrote about the war in Afghanistan.

If you're lucky in this life, a window appears on a battlefield
Between two armies. And when the soldiers look into the window
They don't see their enemies, they see themselves as children
And they stop fighting and go home and go to sleep.
When they wake up, the land is well again.

That poem got me to write poetry again. During the first weekend after September 11TH, I went to Holy Cross Monastery in West Park, New York, where poems came after a two-year reprieve from poems. Something, obviously, about the world had brought that music back into the room. Prose felt too factual, too unable to capture all the feelings I had about politics, survival and conspiracy. I just couldn't get turned on by a paragraph as much as I could by the risk involved in going out on the limb of one, poetic line. The great Russian poet Vladimir Mayakovsky wrote: "The line is a fuse" and I could feel, again, that idea in my blood.

I wanted to write poems that included September 11TH without telling the story of September 11TH which, it seemed to me, was also being a woman writer—igniting the psyche with associational, rather than with historical relevance. That September story was already so surreal, so authentic, it didn't need anything from an artist, a writer. It may have been, as composer Karlheinz Stockhausen said, and got hell for it—"the greatest work of art that is possible in the whole cosmos." It was itself and its transcendent self, body and soul.

And it had all been allegedly made by 19 violent men who couldn't remember being women, or children, or whether their religion said it was okay to get drunk or laid. But they were also men who, in an act of desperation, made a visionary out of Carmen Penny—a girl who will someday be a woman. When that happens, let's turn what's left of the world over to her and to the others of her kind.

MICHAEL KLEIN is a poet and memoirist. This essay is from a forthcoming book, The End of Being Known.





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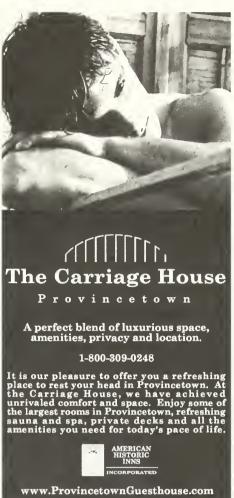
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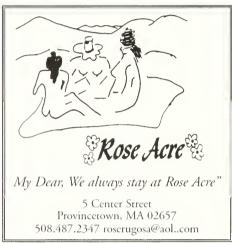
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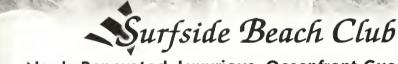
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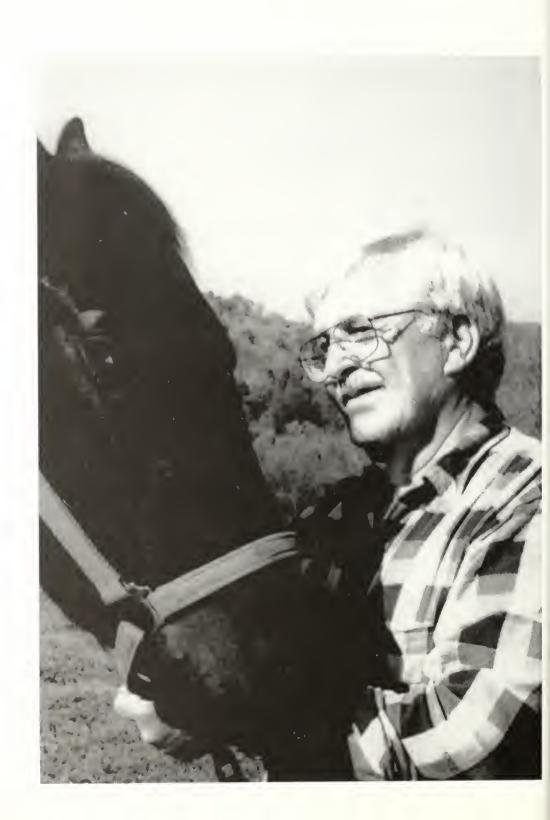
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Tracking Ginger

by RAY CRISTINA



hen Manos got back to what he thought was Hog's driveway, he drove on past and looked for a place to pull off. He found a spot within half a mile. He put the car keys in his pants pocket and the binoculars and revolver in the pockets of his fatigue jacket. Then he started off through the woods, dodging branches and stepping over fallen logs.

When he came to a clearing at the edge of the woods, he dropped to one knee to study the terrain. Electric lines crossed a field on three poles to a house in the distance, a couple of hundred yards away. It was a low gray ranch, and to the side of it was a huddle of trucks and vans.

And there was another huddle, not far from the pool of vehicles. It was a circle of men at the edge of the field. Even at this distance, he could hear their voices.

Manos took out his binoculars, checked the angle of the sun to make sure the lenses wouldn't flash across the field, and then focused on the

Those who weren't in Carhartt wore blue jeans and denim jackets, and there were a lot of flannel shirts and baseball caps. No baseball caps turned backwards, though, as he often saw on city boys. No, these were country boys, and their caps were turned down over their eyes.

Manos scanned the trucks and off-road vehicles in the background. Sure enough, in the cab windows of some of the trucks, and behind the glass panels of some of the vans, he saw dogs. He also noticed, in his magnified view of the cab interiors, more than one rifle rack.

A roar from the crowd went up, and Manos shifted his glasses back to the men. They were leaning into the circle. He could not see what was happening at their feet, but it wasn't hard to guess. Dogs, making or losing money for their owners. Losing blood for their owners.



So which one of these guys was Hog? And what use did he have for Ginger? She was a brave dog, but she wasn't a fighting dog. And what about the two golden retrievers that had gone missing the same week as Ginger? What use would he have for them? They sure as hell weren't fighting dogs.



The crowd roared again. The beast was hungry, Manos thought. More blood.

He needed to get in there. Get in close. At the end of the day, when all the men but one were gone, grab him. That would be Hog.



He looked over the field to decide on a line of approach.

The field had not been mowed for a long time. Some of the weeds, like Queen Anne's lace and ironweed and goldenrod, were waist high, and that worked to his advantage. In other places, though, there was nothing but grass, six to eight inches high, and that was not enough cover.

But-there was a way.

The mower had left a circle of high brush around each of the three poles leading to the house. He could line up one of the poles on the men, like the front sight of a rifle, and crawl straight for it. That way the pole, with its thatch of cover at the base, would always stay between him and the men.

He pulled on his gloves. Then he crept around the edge of the clearing until he reached the point where he wanted to start his crawl. He slid forward on his belly, arms ahead of him on the ground, like a swimmer slipping into the water. Right knee forward. Push. Rest. Right knee forward. Push. This was the only way he could go now, because of his leg-a sidestroke instead of an Australian crawl.



The hard part was keeping your head down, he remembered. The temptation to lift your bead and take a peek was overpowering on a long crawl. But that was the worst mistake. Never look until you reach your target.

The grass was green, but the Queen Anne's lace had turned brown, the thistles were brown, the goldenrod rusty, and the ground was littered with seed cases and brittle stems. The low stuff he crawled over. The high stuff-anything that might wave in the air and mark his passage—he pulled down one stem at a time and broke off at ground level. He never altered course. That's why it took so long to cross a field.



Detours could lead to disaster. You lost your direction, and then you had to look.



A scatter of birds rose from the grass ahead of him, like a handful of shot. He saw them take the sky, his cheek pressed against the ground. He remained still, his pulse racing, then gradually slowing. He resumed his crawl. He was slightly out of breath, and sweat was beading

his hairline—he could feel it—but a rhythm was coming back to him.



He smelled the dead thing long before he reached it. With the first hint, his head snapped back. He recognized the smell immediately. There is nothing else like it.

The body was off to the left. Although he couldn't see it, he knew where it was. And he knew that he would have to look at it.

But he could not lift his head, because if his search did not end here, at the dead thing in the field and God, he hoped it did not-he would want to come back to his path. So he marked it. He removed his gloves and placed one in front of him, the other a foot in front of that, pointing the way to the telephone pole.

Then he crawled left, toward the smell. The closer he got, the more he wanted to hold his breath, but that would make it worse. Instead he panted, shallow breaths through his mouth.

The body was not in high weeds, but in a patch of grass. It was visible from a few feet away. Manos did not venture into the grass. He could see what he had to see from the weeds.

It was a dog, a golden retriever, although no longer golden. Its coat was black with congealed blood. Its eyes were weeping cataracts. Its lips were drawn back in a grimace that mimicked the rage welling up in Manos. The source of the odor was the ripped belly, where the blue bowel spilled out. He could see thread stretching across the bowel. Black stitches.

It must be the missing Millerstown dog, Max, the one that had surgery. The wounds that killed it were the work of other dogs. They had gone for the weakened gut.

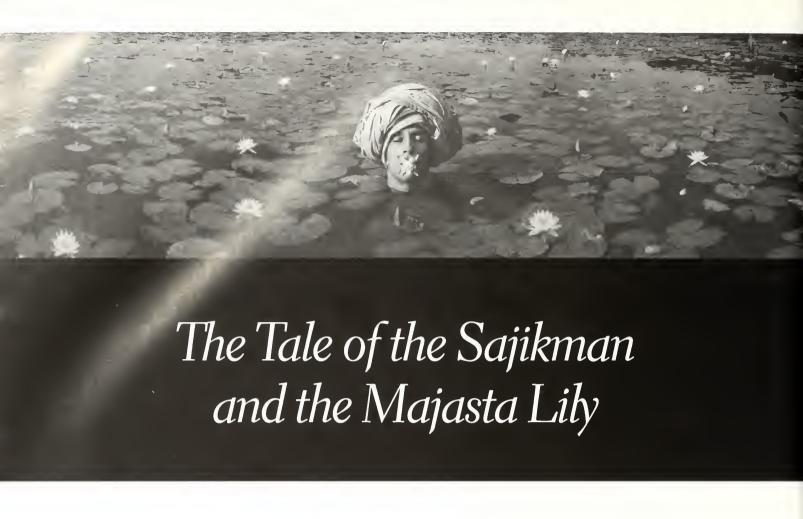
Had Max been used as bait. A warm-up for the main event?



It was not hard to go on from where he left the dead dog. It was not Ginger. He still had a destination. First the telephone pole. Then Hoag. Jasper. Hog.

I don't care what they call you, Manos thought, and I don't care what your history is. I know damn well what your future is.

RAY CRISTINA is the recipient of the ninth annual James Jones First Novel Fellowship, administered by Wilkes University and funded by the James Jones Literary Society, a bequest of James Jones, author of From Here to Eternity and The Thin Red Line, among other classics of modern literature. The magazine is pleased again to publish the winning selection; last year we published "Beautiful Somewhere Else" by Stephen Phillip Policoff.



Nicholas Kahn and Richard Selesnick

he Sajikman had everything a grandi and holy man ever wanted, enough persimmons, medlars and dates, lapis lazuli and frankincense to make even a sultan envious. His libraries were filled with the great wisdom of many lands, wrapped in the hides of wildebeest and peccary; his many spired storehouses creaked with the burden of too many camel's wool robes and nubian carpets, silk chapans and turkoman kilims. He did not lack for anything animal or mineral. His land was lush, an oasis in the desert of lies. But as he was a good and pious musliman, he did not drink the fermented spirits of his medlars: the soft illusions they offered were no match for the splendor of his kingdom. It is true, he was sorely tempted by the Qat the dervishes chewed to bring them to their whirling god. And he was oft bedeviled by tales of the pipe well

seasoned by the exudeae of poppy flowers; lured he was, but never did he dare press it to his lips-no, the holy scripts were intoxicant enough for the pious and upright Sajikman.

One day a wandering sufi came to the palace gates. All he had to offer was a odd lump of brown and tentacled matter wrapped in an old turban.

"For a drink of your sweet water I will let you know the sweet odor of paradise," the sufi offered.

So wise a traveler was a rare sight in the desert of lies, so the Sajikman piously accepted his this strange gift.

"This is no ordinary water lily," the sufi continued, "not even the enlightened and revered lotus rivals the scent of the majasta lily. Plant it well and you shall never want for the intoxicating taste of your own true inner nature."

No sooner had the Sajikman accepted the gibbering bundle than the sufi had disappeared. The Sajikman did not even notice that the stranger had not partaken of his waters.

At first he dared not swim amongst so treasured a bloom—just to see it from his balcony at night and feel its sweet perfumes upon his tongue was enough. But before long he could not help but wade into the pool in his huge silken nightshirt to be closer to his beloved. And before long, the bloated Sajikman was spending day after day, night after night floating listlessly upon the waters of his secret love. Why wait till tomorrow when the true heaven was here on earth? One breath was enough to know he was in the paradise that the Almighty One offered in the land to come. And all the while, the traders continued to ply their wares at the city gates, unaware of the sweet putrid stink that was even now spreading upon and pervading the ancient city in the desert of lies.

The Three Brothers



hree brothers, Tihfa, Sarjon, and Nahgra gathered outside the village each evening for some mint tea and gif on the great hill that overlooked the fields of dates and bristly sedge. During these times they could speak freely, without fear of censure from those who did not understand the brother's strange ways. For Tihfa, Sarjon, and Nahgra were born on the same night from the same egg from the same mother, and as the qif melted the boundaries the world had imposed upon their tripled mind, they felt again as one. One evening, in the cloud-herded dusk, the brothers had a vision. Upon the plain in front of them, a white city glowed where no city had lay the moment before.

"What veil has been lifted my brothers! Do you not see that a vast city of salt has burst forth upon the grazing lands?" said Tihfa to his astonished companions.

"Indeed I do!" choked out Sarjon. "Its filigreed domes and arabesques are more splendid and heartbreaking than Damascus! The crystalline white Casbah shatters the minds of those who dare to wander its radiant alleys in search of the crystals that bedazzle the eyes with brightness impossible! Come, let us depart at once for the city gates."

"No, no, my dear brothers!" implored poor Nahgra. "Can you not see how the minarets crumble, how the bridges decay—why the entire city is made of salt and ash, with one touch the whole edifice will crumble to ruins. No man should ever walk those cursed alleyways. It is a city of death!"

"Quiet! Quiet! Sarjon, Nahgra, we shall neither go to nor run from the white city," said Tihfa. "And I assure you as soon as the moon disappears behind those clouds so will the city of salt. For these twin cities of heaven and hell are like ourselves, born of the same egg. And I tell you this: is not the salty taste of our tears the same from joy as it is from sor-

As the last of the twilight faded, the three brothers grew indistinct, fading from view until they had vanished entirely. The city, however, did not fade; in fact, as the populace returned to their homes and lit the lanterns within them, the lights of the city soon came to obscure the starry sky that hung like a dream above the eroded mountains.

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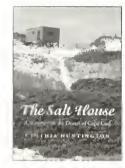
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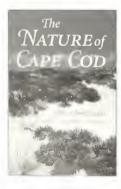
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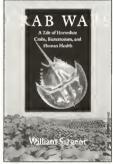
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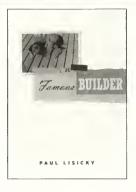
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Timeless:

Like Fossilized Footprints

As a reader, I turn to poems to feel accompanied. The best poems do that by creating not only a sense of location, but also recreate the experience of a mind making its way through that location. Poems become, in this way, timeless; like the fossilized footprint of an early human uncovered by archeologists, good poems fix time, they gesture and recreate, and render into language a sense of mystery. The best poems create feeling while feeding the senses. They give pleasure.

The poems in this issue of *Provincetown Arts* offer a variety of pleasures—those of story, lyricism, or formal procedures. Work too is a pleasure when it engages the mind, and some of the poems here may require heightened sensitivity or openness; these poets trust the reader to bring her best reading-self forward. They do not underestimate their audience, which I consistently admire. The poets you will read in these pages live in all parts of the country (and one outside of the country)— North Carolina, Boston, Oakland, Brooklyn, Ann Arbor, Texas, Rome, Provincetown and elsewhere, and reinforce the notion that literature is a national art form that transcends all borders. In addition to geographic diversity, these poets are at many different stages of career, though a majority of them I count among my peers. I gather this selection of poems and present them—not as an indication of a trend or as members of a school but as occasions for the pleasures of reading.

-Mark Wunderlich

Carmen Gimenez-Rosello

Photo of a Girl on a Beach

Once when I was harmless and didn't know any better,

a mirror to the front of me and an ocean behind,

I lay wedged in the middle of daylight, paper doll thin, dreaming an ocean

meant for somebody else. Then I vanished.

That day had been like all others. It passed obediently through its life

and, as always, I promised myself never to lose its warm fine goodness.

I gave the day a fingerprint, then forgot.

I sat naked on a towel on a hot June Monday. My eyes were closed.

The sun etched the insides of my eyelids while a boy dozed at my side.

The smell of all oceans was around us—steamy salt, shell, and sweat,

but I reached for the distant one. The tide rose while I slept,

and soon I was alone. Try being a figure in memory. It's hollow there.

For truth's sake, I'll say she was on a beach and her eyes were closed.

She was bare in the sand, long, and the hour took her bit by bit.

Jason Zuzga

Reagan

Second grade: he's shot.

Ouch that stings, in the armpit,

I could feel it too, shoulder clutch and

huddle now against the wall. I engage

the entire second grade in a simulation of

Escape from Witch Mountain. I am picked

last for kickball. I kick the air hard.

All night the green lights in the trees are

spies; home is not a building; it is us.

My dad meets Reagan at a dinner and shakes his hand.

One day I stay home sick from school;

my friend Jennifer comes over

and tells me how at lunchtime

one girl had swung a whole loop

around the swingset, got tangled up

in the chains and broke both her arms.

That was a lie, a good one.

Cynthia Huntington

Curse One: The Wraith

You are a small shape of death crouched among leaves.

The twist of your red mouth is the torque of poison.

Tangle of leaves, spill of leaves, slow rot of leaves...

Misery, ruin, iniquity. You are the scuffling thing in the dry grass. rodent, snail, the consequence of leaves, rentipede, rat snake.

I see you by the bounded barbecue in November, brooding like the smoke of burned meat. The fire in the coals gone out, the sun hum of worder wand weak in a smoldering sky, cold breath of worder. You are all smoke breath, grief and conniving. The knite blade under the rib, the stone carried in the lung. You are the alien thing invading my garden, a haunt, a plague, lurking beyond light and warmth, there in the shadows wearing death inside out, a curse on the sky. You are a spot, a flaw, a blotch and a stain on the world you corrupt and I hate you and fear you and look for you everywhere with dread.

G. E. Patterson

Am I scared, he wants to know, am I scared

My condition is a poor excuse for that

A Certain Mood invented by Candlelight

"... think of it...."
—Robert Duncan

"... leading to the beginning"—GalwayKinnell

Say the rain started in the night and stopped Because it is time and it is important Continuing the wind lessened with help The pearl seen in the open mouth of love

The answer is a factory of candles While for what it's worth the street's hum and glow Who dreamed up garnet or the color jasper This light the damp air the encircled body

Yes the wind failed despite the noise it made The wind dropped beneath a gibbous moon When the sun's out shadows dominate gardens This is true: See the sky is a soft gray

The wind died without a line on its face Before it reached you it was hurrying

Cyrus Cassells

The Shepherd of the Villa Caffarella

adjusts his earphones, as the sheep range around him in the Roman sun. I am an apprentice of umber light and shadow in the villa, and I know him a little from my walks. Usually we talk of the quotidian, soccer or weather, amid brambles and voluble belled goats, constellations of Queen Anne's lace-

On villa land, he has shown me a ruined columbarium from the days of Constantine, and a sacred grove, inundated with dasies—

Once he led me-the villa emerald again after winterto a grotto adorned with a nymph's statue, headless, voluptuous, agile-The water in the ornamental pool shimmered. The dusk was freaked with the little upended exclamation points of poppies, and there was a pulse, a thread between us, rife with waiting. But we grew fainthearted, afraid to touch, as if some shared holiness might be defiled—

Still, out soft-natured, sustaining friendliness prevails, undeterred. And like any beautiful and commanding thing, the shepherd of the Villa Caffarella is uncapturable, transfixing as the infant Moses drifting among the astonished reedsor a red flash: a pheasant in the grass near the grotto.

Katharine Whitcomb

Through the Window

I am lucky, Despite What the rich may think.

My soul is new On the earth.

These wounds are serious.

God once Bathed me in brilliance From the corner Of the living room.

I remember everything.

A blinding light swept My head.

I spend my life learning And will never Be healed.

Second Dream

Code over the water. It was March, snow streaked the winklescattered sand. Beach flung with medallions. Code, our hand-tohand; code, each word a dalliance. Code, you get me? In the cold wind there was no ivory fan, no lamplit room, no perfumed dress. Lover, this account works on the surface, semaphores across a page: my ungainly traveled laughter. See how much I want everything still. Code, what I'm implying. And how foolish not to offer (say it—to give) that which is mine.

Ca oline Crumpacker

Whispering Balzac

Cousine says, You have not a son.

I reply My child is ironic self-regard.

I breastfed her on tea and roses.

I chose a father who would not get in the way and I raised her with the skirts of minor spirits.

She has a jewel for every bridge in Paris and yet she is resentful. I tell *her My own father, be got in the way* but she feels unfinished: a wrong sentence unspoken and mistyped.

I say You are a refrain, an oratory, you are a rhyme and a rhythm but she is unmoved. Her father is of noble imaginings and fishy politics. He lives surrounded by his thoughts as my father was surrounded by us, like a lynx by prey. She is whispering Balzac, a strange admonition. I say He lives in the Provinces, the glances, the parlor and she, stupid girl, will go there.

Language Is My Bitch

Soon you will be cold all over. Soon you will understand that you had never been cold before.

This recollection is ambiguous.
Helpful and also cruel.
You let it serve you there in your youth
and your uninhabited female qualities.
You let it be a tiger and you a tiger
and you let the jungle be rich with rain between you.

You let the recollection be correct. You let it sleep the way plants sleep not like you or that ice queen you call function. Not her steely wand, her coiled hand, her curse of many rivers.

In the halls of cognition, she is paying so she will call the waiter with that inflection that means she could have him fired just to please the fashion.

Waiter, this one is too acidic. It's too fruity. It's too rancid. What else do you have?

She uncoiled that fox around her neck and pretends there is a new beast in the world that only she knows of.

She gives it a name.

Don't think you wouldn't take to the streets to find her.
Don't think she isn't dirty.
Don't think you wouldn't have the people she has had because you would and they would say the same things to you and you would blush.

That is her nom de plume and her carriage is made of plumes.
Wearing a fox, a minx, a cinnamon squirrel.

A great silkiness descends and in it are all the problems and all the betrayals but gorgeous. Like a great dance. Take her away.

I need to see the birds when they first appear in the morning and I don't want her there, naming them and shooting them and making them into a dress.

Cate Marvin

Your Call Is Very Important To Us

Which is why when we call you we keen, so you may shake harder in your waiting, and should you question whether it is true, you'll learn from your longing how very

important we find you. So when we drop blue upon your head, then swing ourselves against your eyes like a leaden pipe, then soothe your brow with golden, streaming

clouds of light, you'll wake at last from your fever, your fright, and know we knew you'd call, that we've been waiting for you all along. Then we'll call back, shriller still,

for what is an audience that does not cry back? For whose lover does not hold back? For who loves and will not answer the phone? So when we drop night's block on your head

as a door loves to slam a hand in its jamb, when we land beneath your heel, our stars shards of glass left unswept on a floor, we are only waiting for your call.

We knew it had to be you all along. Your alertness to the sky, your painful, "Why?" Your somber way of walking yourself home alone. If not for our siren cry, what would

you do? How else could you believe anyone, anyone at all, cared about you? Here, have a drink on us; we'll have a drink on you. Your taxi has left. Your home is ransacked.

We would ask that you not cry out. We would ask you not to speak, although we speak to you. You will consider the back door, a distant country. Know we can reach at least that far to find you.

Monica Youn

Venice, Unaccompanied

Waking on the train I thought we were attacked

by light: chrome-winged birds hatching from the lagoon.

That first day the buoys were all that made the harbor

bearable: pennies sewn into a hemline. Later I learned to live in it,

to walk through the alien citya bee-keeper's habit-

with fierce light clinging to my head and hands. Treated as gently as every

other guesteach house's barbed antennae trawling for any kind

of weatherstill I sobbed in a glass box on an unswept street

with the last few lire ticking like fleas off my phonecard I'm sorry

I can't stand this, which one of us do you love?

Christine Hume

Send Up

Seas surround us and ambush the city. One sea drums its names through beltways and straightaway Nowhere cuts in front. Sun burns the water there and we go above on boats. We had been thinking in black and white anyway: five arctic hares swimming in their own outlines, sirens cartwheeling the pitch. In the beginning we saw only dark water and the radiant brains of distant wave-carved ice. Before this, we had a scene in mind and forgot out bodies there. Anything that real cannot be found in an ocean, but its lapping draws us well underway. All this takes the sea's shape, and after that, it takes away. Once we had pavement glitter and traffic's appetite. Once all water hung in a cloud above us. That water moves through the spillway; it moves as if it doesn't believe we exist. Where were we then? Without belonging, we wear out. We wear our hither to the hilt. Long as a vanishing point we take for a shortcut. We're ticking off stars until they drop sorry out of sight. They fall into dirty water slapping the horizon happy. But where were we? The city's lights stare up hard at us. Our first heaven held under, that we may grow asunder.

D. A. Powell

[chapt. ex ex ex eye vee: in which scott has a birthday]

chapt. ex ex ex eye vee: in which scott has a birthday [many happy returns of the day, says piglet] & buys himself a puppy

soon the scent of burning leaves is too much. hunting season the crisp flannel air and hot oatmeal: instead of fishin'

crunching out through the yawping woods. with his terrier legs spindled as muskets. his slight chest heaves. his slender derriere

a pale chalkmark among the birches. for a time he sits and smokes scratching the curious brown dog behind its ears. then snow

dusting down like dandruff on their collars. they wait on haunches listen for the woodchuck or roebuck: they have their lunches

and the whiteness covers them almost completely. far enough away from this moon and those rabbits and the geese

Nick Flynn

Blind Huber (xii)

Thus transfixed, stare blank at one

immovable thing, ocean or statue, fifty years thus, to see

if it moves. Burnens

covers the walls with prepressed comb, factory-punched,

so we can live inside a hive,

my chair dead-center, beside my queen. Chain after chain

of bodies, a fabric

above, lowering. Forty days I sat, until the comb began

to press my chest. Burnens brought water at first, described their

labors, the tomb being built.

when he could no longer join me I lived on what honey fell

to my lips. I wanted to see if the hive moved,

& it did, but not as much as I had hoped.

Wax Father

Each day the son came for more, scraping comb

freshly laid, kneeling apologetic. The father collapsed, the boy

wasn't ready, so he built a replica of the old man in order to save him. When

the legs gave out he fashioned legs, when the hands began to tremble he fashioned hands,

& as the fever spread he mad a head. At the

bedside, he studied the creases edging his father's eyes, the bones pressing up from the cheeks,

the places the skull

turned inward. The lungs filled—he built a torso. As he finished

each limb, each organ, he carried it to the church & pinned it above the altar, until nearly

his entire body hung there.

R. P. Gouirand

Mira

Last due date: SEPT 30 1985. In the margins, some previous reader pencils in excitement, ringing nouns

in the thin gray line. The circles gape like heads of nails, breathless disturbance. Amidst the firmament

the hand connects—graphite scratch of swift planets, bodies without address or rest. In later pages,

the haloes fade, revealing sharper points. Arrows fix their objects, entirely desire. Lucid among the stars,

the bill of a crow indicates what it wants, pointed, perpetually hungry capella. This stillness

seems endless. Other stars hang in the periphery, varying sizeschapters pass before I suspect

the descent of Cetus, the Whale, gloating in a long, complex song, cool gray recital, every tip

gleaming, x and y axes twisting for radiant emphasis. A half-erased cross flickers at his fluke, between mass

and muscle. "Periodicity" has been underlined twice. Hean in to the varying star, her red rise blurred by pages' faces, and darken

dim Mira, the asterisk he uses to push.

Frances Richard

Silver Cup Studios

Across the riverness. Reflected on the scummed estuarine wash, upcurrent from the DOMINO sugar dock. A verite' folle. The present slipping out. And so it happens

to be dusk again, predictably, because you crave crepuscule and are yourself unsure. People are not like landscape. Even landscape is not.

The grain of molecule. Murmur's sex. Encrypted

or describe such nondescript, low comforting drone, an autoerotic ode to. Flâneur-ify: new hyacinth, drab awning or soot window briefly bronzed, storey-high frowzy neon stutters on reliably. Nice blight.

Your campfire tale. Your lovenest. All unreals-Unclarity: is ownership

a picture and does pleasure give confidence. The sodden mattress bulges, silky pallet in the weeds, read bubble-writ, enshadowed tags spraypainted. Your name

for this, the tender lurid surface means the river doubles as the river. Does stability-what. Something. Does it please.

Sarah Messer

My Personal Savior

In this season of puddles opening and closing their ice in the driveway, you'll balance on one leg

in my yard, an aficionado of hypodermics and cartwheels. You'll pickle your own fingers

to make me love you, rub mud on your tights. Inside my tar paper shack, I'll be the girl sleeping under the plastic

tent, spider webs knitting my lungs. You'll be my lawn ornament, pin-wheeling the down pour, your yellow Easter hat

tossed among the rusted chairs, the sunken El Dorado, the oil barrels turned on their sides like old ponies.

Your wet robe will cling like egg yolk, your mind, a soggy flotilla hop scotching through thoughts of resurrection—

fingering earthworms like DNA strands and recalling that inside beyond the weather stripping, spaghetti sticks

to the ceiling above the stove and somebody might be dying. Last year's lettuce flops in make-shift gardens—

window-boxes, tires, the abandoned coffin freezer—the leaves frozen and refrozen like EZ bake stained glass. Your white

sneakers are two doves perched at the edge of the muddy lawn. The doctors have long since stopped calling you

inside to say goodbye. When I last saw you, they had to life the oxygen mask so that I could speak—clear green, an old

aquarium, my voice leaky and filled with outlined fish. Everything I have I said, I give to you not because you deserve it

but because you've stood outside for days in the rain in that ridiculous Jesus outfit.

Carmen Gimenez-Rosello has published poems in Boston Review, Chicago Review and American Letters & Commentary. She lives in Oakland, California.

Jason Zuzga was a 2001-02 poetry fellow at the Fine Arts Work Center.

Cynthia Huntington's new book of poem, The Radiant, is forthcoming from Four Way Books.

G. E. Patterson is the author of *Tug.* He currently lives in the San Francsico Bay

Cyrus Cassells' most recent book is Beautiful Signor. He lives in Austin, Texas.

Katharine Whitcomb is the author of Saints of South Dakota. She is a former poetry fellow at the Fine Arts Work Center.

Caroline Crumpacker was a 2001-02 poetry fellow at the Fine Arts Work Center. She is a founding editor of *Fence* magazine.

Cate Marvin is the author of World's Tallest Disaster which received the Kate Tufts Poetry Prize. She currently lives in Cincinnati.

Monica Youn's first collection of poems, Barter, is forthcoming from Graywolf Press. She lives in New York City.

Christine Hume is the author of Musca Domestica and is a former fellow at the Fine Arts Work Center. She lives in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

D. A. Powell's most recent book is *Lunch*. He is currently Briggs Copeland Lecturer in Poetry at Harvard University.

Nick Flynn is the author of Some Ether. His second collection of poems, Blind Huber, is forthcoming from Graywolf Press.

Rae Gouirand recently finished graduate studies at the University of Michigan where she received the Hopwood Award. She lives in Ann Arbor.

Frances Richard's first book of poems, See Through, is forthcoming from Four Way Books. She is nonfiction editor of Fence magazine.

Sarah Messer is the author of the book of poems, Bandit Letters and the forthcoming memoir Red House. She lives in Wilmington, North Carolina.



Gregory Amenoff's Trellises

BY WILLIAM CORBETT

regory Amenoff has never been an either/or painter. He's a both/and painter, not Enough but Too Much whose aesthetic is go for broke. His emotional range can reach despair and exaltation on a single small, roughly one-foot square canvas or on a surface near the scale of a billboard. His show of recent paintings at Boston's Nielsen Gallery this past January was not a departure for him but a respite, a calmer vision framed by flower-laden trellises.

Before entering that world I must pause over the show's centerpiece, a guest really from Amenoff's ongoing John Ford period, the huge "Monument" (96 by 120 inches). When Ford was introduced to Monument Valley on the Arizona-Utah border he came upon the setting for his great Western myths from the cavalry series, through *The Searchers* to *Cheyenne Autumn*. Amenoff's butte "Monument" can be found on no map, but it has a Western expansiveness and brooding grandeur worthy of Ford. It is a dark picture with scattered outbursts of bright color, *overbright* like so many of nature's tasteless displays.

Amenoff will almost certainly return to extravaganza but last summer while working in the Wellfleet/Truro Boundbrook Island studio of Sidney Hurwitz and Penelope Jencks, he took some time away to paint his trellis pictures. My guess is that two factors influenced him as he worked. He and his wife Sonia were awaiting the birth of their son August Paul Amenoff. The trellis paintings have a summer nest-building calm and a full flowering ripeness. The other factor is place. While not exactly new to the Outer Cape, Amenoff is new enough so he registers the light and weather on its own terms. He has yet to absorb the place into his imagination as he has absorbed and painted, for many summers, the feeling of space in Northern New Mexico.

You can see this in "Trellis (Clearing)," a painting 60 by 66 inches, one of the show's common sizes, used on the Nielsen announcement card. A swag of quilted flowers frames a view of ocean mist-you can feel it on your face and taste it on your lips—as it is lifting. Since his Blakean visionary landscapes of a decade ago Amenoff's work has increasingly been illuminated by weather often a dramatic storm-light. In the trellis pictures he is subtler, revealing a new delicacy and restraint. If this has been called forth by the moment and will pass so be it; for it will pass into the mix of sensitivity, dream, and aspiration Amenoff will bring into his studio in the future.

The trellis motif had its beginning in the air-

borne bouquets, cloud-clumps of flowers of Amenoff's last New York show. Here the flowers hang heavily like curtains pulled aside on the view. My notes on "Trellis (First Light)" will convey my immediate impression of these massed flowers: "Gorgeous, the paint celebrated, purple/orange flowers, the 'wrong' colors nature gives us, creamy curd clouds gold and green." The poet Mallarme pointed out that when we use the words rose and peony we call to mind but one flower. He liked to use the word flower because a reader can summon from it a bouquet of various flowers. Amenoff's trellises are bedecked with no botanically correct flora, however possible they become with a fertile imagination. They are lush

blossoms nourished by sea air.

Amenoff has always gloried in the life-giving materiality of paint. In short dashing strokes and larger passages, colors have been blended, becoming an impastoed liquid tweed. His surfaces have a bold churning roughness. They flow like river water roughened by wind and current. These serve landscapes that are profoundly American: they have been imagined in innocent wonder.

WILLIAM CORBETT is a poet who lives in Boston and is a writer in residence at MIT. His most recent book is All Prose, selected essays and reviews published by Zoland Books.

Provincetown East West by Barbara Cohen

BY SUSAN SELIGSON

University Press of New England

s the "Walking Fool" columnist for the weekly Provincetown Banner, I have a reputation to uphold. For the two decades I've lived here I have walked for miles nearly every day, sometimes with friends but often alone. Though I've traced nearly every expanse of the back beach, the sand flats, the moors, and the scrub forests embracing a patchwork of ponds, marshes, and bogs I also love to poke around the neighborhoods, side streets, and cemeteries. Turning the pages of Barbara E. Cohen's recent book, I now know I have a silent companion on these forays: the artistic spirit of Cohen herself. I have always admired her work; this collection in particular speaks to me. Her Polaroid paintings are images of the Provincetown one knows as one knows the face of her child or the body of her lover, reflecting intimacy and reverence.

From the much-photographed Old Harbor lifesaving station to the rich, jolly green profile of a truck belonging to the restaurant Adrian's, Cohen's images reflect the gratitude the artist feels toward the Cape tip, her part-time home since 1993 and the object of her desire for decades. An experienced photographer, Cohen switched to Polaroid from 35-mm film because it enabled her to shape, alter and enhance the pictures in an abstract, painterly way. Using SX 70 and 600 Plus Polaroid film, Cohen manipulates the images as the film develops, drawing lines with a pointed instrument to create abstract effects. With a light, selective touch she then paints the pictures in oil. Most recently Cohen has used the same method to create collages, a few of which appear in Provincetown East West.



BARBARA COHEN, "ADRIAN'S RESTAURANT: GREEN TRUCK PARKED ON ROUTE 6"

I open Cohen's small but potent book to "Red Rowboat on the Bay" and find myself pulled into a scene I know well. How many mornings have I walked the East End flats mesmerized by that single slash of red against a sky and seascape of pale blues and mauve and gray? At sunset and first light the boat glows as if some unseen hand had flipped it on with a switch. One doesn't have to have a long and meaningful relationship with that boat, as this Walking Fool does, to appreciate it as an artist's shorthand for the beauty beyond the picture's edge. Cohen's tour takes us to light-dappled Beech Forest, where human presence is a faint rumor, and to the west-end breakwater, a manmade affair that has long settled cozily into the natural landscape. Like my own daily treks, Cohen's camera doesn't slight the populous side of our wisp of barrier spit. We see Stormy Mayo's unruly crowd of dahlias haranguing Bradford Street. We see the Lobster Pot restaurant and the Harvey Dodd

Gallery looking as delectable as if they were molded out of cake. And we see Ryan Landry in blazing carnival drag. Sunsets, first light, last dance-Cohen loves it all.

I have friends in far-flung places that, sadly, have never been to Provincetown. I'm always looking for the right book—just one book—I can send them as a way of saying, "Here is what I see every day, here is the reason I live here." This is that book, frank and irresistible. "I road my bike through Beech Forest, in and around the dunes and beaches and circling through the town," writes Cohen, describing her first summer here. "The beauty was endless."

SUSAN V. SELIGSON is a freelance writer whose work has appeared in many publications, including the New York Times Magazine and the Atlantic Monthly. Her new book, Going with the Grain: A Wandering Bread Lover Takes a Bite Out of Life, will be published in the fall by Simon & Schuster.

Vintage Jazz

BY LARRY COLLINS

remarkable collection of photographs from the 1950's of jazz greats has surfaced after more than four decades in a private family collection. About four dozen rare vintage prints by photographers Lisette Model, Jerry Dantzic, Hugh Bell, Al Fairweather, Ronnie Braithwaite, Steve Shapiro, and others make up this archive that was collected by Maely Daniele Dufty, the entertainment editor in the 1950's for the Harlem newspaper, the Citizen Call. About half the photographs are by Model and were probably given to Dufty in appreciation of her efforts to secure work for the photographer. This collection is being shown publicly for the first time in exhibitions this year at Gallery 292, the Howard Greenberg Gallery's salon-style space in New York, and at Driskel Vintage Photography at the Schoolhouse Center for Art and Design in Provincetown.

Fifty years ago Lisette Model was in Provincetown photographing Hans Hofmann and the activities at his famous school of painting. It was at that time that she and a friend conceived the idea of a book of Model's photographs of jazz performers. She secured the collaboration of Langston Hughes to provide poetry for the book, for Hughes was an authority on jazz, as well as being a poet. He wrote newspaper columns on the subject, columns that Model habitually clipped and saved. For the next few years Model devoted herself to this project, which would combine her two great creative passions, photography and music. She stalked the jazz performers from club to club in New York, at the popular Music Inn in Lenox, Massachusetts, and to the newly formed jazz festivals in New York City and Newport, Rhode Island. She had in hand a press pass of sorts, a letter from a friend at Harper's Bazaar stating that Model was working on a book of jazz photographs for the magazine. She would ensconce herself close to the performers, photographing most often from a low eye level, her typical vantage point. She elevated her subjects into extreme foreshortening above the crowd, like sculptures on pedestals. These photographs depict New York jazz greats in their heyday of the 1950s, in dark smoky clubs, onstage at night with searing spotlight illumination. Ella is here, eyes closed, in a groove, both hands holding the microphone. Louis Armstrong singing; Louis playing his horn. A smiling Louis is framed by hands on stick-like clarinets moving in from the sides. The exhibitions also include images of pianists Horace Silver, Willie "The Lion" Smith, and John Lewis. There are photographs of Percy Heath on



LISETTE MODEL, ELLA FITZGERALD SINGING, C 1954

bass, the great Ray Charles, and Dizzy Gillespie as an amateur photographer with his camera.

Model never did, in fact, obtain the financial backing she needed to produce the book. Ann Thomas, author of the catalog for the 1990 retrospective of Lisette Model's work at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa, provides much of the information used here. She relates the story of the cool reception that Model received in her meeting with Helena Rubenstein, the cosmetics giant and art patron. Hoping that Rubenstein would provide the financial backing that she sought for her project, she was unaware that the meeting had been sabotaged by a disingenuous friend who had set up the interview for her but privately warned Rubenstein beforehand of Model's leftist politics.

Model was born in Vienna at the turn of the century. She first studied music and was a student of the composer Arnold Shonberg. Her first important photographic work was the series of large figures lounging along the Promenade des Anglais in Nice. After moving with her husband to New York City in 1938 she began two influential series of photographs, Reflections and Running Legs, dramatic and new images of the streets. Her pictures of New York's loud and colorful clubs and Coney Island bathers, plus her affiliation with the Photo League, an organization seeking to employ photography for the promotion of social change, had a strong influence on the New York photography world. It was, however, her 30year teaching career at the New School for

Social Research throughout the '50s, '60s and '70s that has had the most profound influence on American photography. Her students included Bruce Weber, Larry Fink, and Diane Arbus.

David Carrino, a photographer and director of contemporary photography at Schoolhouse Center in Provincetown, studied with Model in a master class near the end of her teaching career. She told him, "Darling, you need to destroy all these pictures, they are bad. But, next time you will do wonderful work." She had an incredible, intuitive eye and her instincts were amazing, according to Carrino. He recalls a bravura performance during a lesson in composition using a student's fashion photograph. Holding it up in front of the class and tearing the head off the model, she proclaimed, "Now it is good." She hated the concept of starting with the answers and having the work follow. Rather, her obsessive quest for beauty and truth, her grand theme, demanded constant questioning, with the possibility that one of the photos might reveal an answer. She felt that one must distinguish between sincerity and truth. "Always seek truth," she admonished the students, "and don't bother to take a picture unless you feel it in your gut."

Model contributed photos to Harper's Bazaar in the '40s and '50s, but Carrino says that Model was not successful in her commercial work because her work was considered too weird. Paul Strand told her that she could not photograph Americans the way she photographed Europeans. Model retained a sanguine "School of Paris" eye that was too rough and unflattering for many Americans. Life and Look were definitely not interested in Model's work, and indeed much of the work she submitted to Harper's was not accepted for publication. Model also had the habit of manipulating her prints in the darkroom, sometimes bending the paper during exposure to produce an altered image. She did not care about the consistency of the print or the print as a fine object. She was intent on the subject and intended to get the image to transcend the limits of the technology and current procedures by whatever means needed. "They say my prints are bad," said Model, "but they should see my negatives."

However much Model insisted on the primacy of her subjects as opposed to the pleasures of the print or abstractions of form, it is her brilliance in composition that supports these images, gives them lasting power, and separates her work from lesser talents. Deep instincts for dynamic compositions, such as those of Model's, can be studied but never learned. In these jazz photographs energetic diagonals slide across picture planes of interlocked lights and darks, while others pair off to converge back into deeper space. Limitless in variation her compositional creations appear effortlessly, over and over, like the visions inside a kaleidoscope made of a few big chunks and slender rods, endlessly shifting.

Photographs of the jazz scene were given as gifts or traded as mementos by those in that milieu, like Maely Dufty, who put this collection together. Maely was Charlie Parker's manager for a time and with her husband, William Dufty, had friendships with many of the famous jazz artists of the period such as Duke Ellington and, most par-

ticularly, Billie Holiday. William co-authored "Lady Sings the Blues," published in 1956, with Billie. She lived with the Duftys at times and became godmother to their son Bevan, who inherited the collection upon his mother's death in 1984. It was within the jazz world of the 1950's in New York that the lives of Maely Dufty, Billie Holiday, and Lisette Model converged. Model photographed Holiday a number of times. Surely her most poignant image is a postmortem portrait of Billie in her coffin. her face a dark form, her hair adorned with the trademark gardenia, peaceful and appearing to float in a sea of brilliant white. Though none of Model's portraits of Billie are in the collection, one by Seigfried Mohr is there. A beautiful smiling face looks upward; she wears long drop earrings. The Duftys' affection for their friend is revealed by an inscription on the reverse-LADY DAY "Our Girl."

While the Models are the heart of the Dufty collection, other fine photographers are represented as well. The Metropolitan Museum and the Whitney Museum in New York have recently acquired Jerry Dantzic's work. In this collection his two startling up-close head shots of Horace Silver-working, sweating, with his tongue sticking out—contrast with a somewhat conventional portrait of an aging W. C. Handy, composer of "St. Louis Blues." Duke Ellington, Billy Strayhorn, Count Basie, Gene Krupa, and Coleman Hawkins are all here, photographed either by Tony Karp, Hugh Bell, Al Fairweather, or one of several other photographers. Hugh Bell's portrait of a woozy Billie Holiday backstage at Carnegie Hall in 1956 was featured last year in a large exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum, "Committed to the Image: Contemporary Black Photographers."

Dantzic seldom photographed jazz subjects, but there are eight pieces by him in this group. One fine example shows a wildly drumming Gene Krupa, arms blurred and teeth bared in an intense grimace. It is the opposite of Bell's contemplative Miles Davis, standing with his horn in one hand and supporting his tilted head with the other, a vertical composition quietly relieved by soft diagonals in the background. His compositional talents along with his ability to distill each subject to a specific meaningful gesture-a drumstick held in the mouth; a weary gaze across the piano; a hand held against a cheek-make his work, after Model's, the strongest in the collection. A number of these works by Model and Bell are compelling creations independent of their subjects and redefine Maely Dufty's fascinating archive of mementos into a collection that contains beautiful and rare works of art.

LARRY COLLINS is director of the Driskel Gallery and curator of vintage photography at the Schoolhouse Center for Art and Design in Provincetown. Formerly a professor of art at the Massachusetts College of Art and at the University of New Hampshire, he is a painter and photographer.

Dianna Matherly What is Faith?

BY KARIN COOK

n this recent series of paintings from the fall of 2001, Dianna Matherly's signature figure, a rounded Haringesque creature, culled from two decades of pen and ink drawings in her journals, is remade here in oil stick and scratched raw with varying-sized nails. Nails.

Matherly's physical vocabularycomprised of holding, grasping, leaning, and reaching-signals communion in the broadest sense. These orbed figures share an emotional and spiritual interconnectedness, occupying a companionable landscape, suggesting sea and sky, and implying a spiritual poster child. There's a rowboat, a tree with exposed roots, a hand emerging from water. The canvas is worked over, layered. A fan brush manipulates brown and white into a creamy parchment, the oldest paper, and the oldest book.

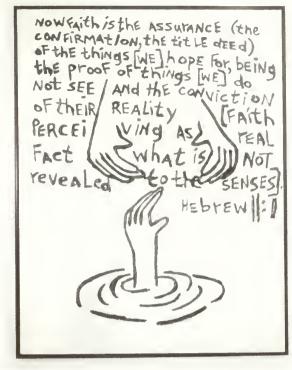
And then there is the Word.

The Biblical text in Matherly's recent work calls up the late Howard Finster: not Finster, the canvas-crowder, mosaic-painter, but Finster the preacher. Matherly's use of scripture is bigger, bolder and yet spare. Where Finster would load hundreds of tiny words compulsively on a canvas, Matherly generally uses less than 30. Her letters are tilted indiscriminately, cap and lower case mixed. From a distance they are less words than gull tracks.

In "Hebrew 11:1," as a drowning hand reaches up toward the text for help, a pair of hands descends from the scripture preparing to receive. These rescuing hands bracket the text, framing the meaning of faith and cupping the words "what is" in their palms. As a writer, I am drawn to a canvas that shares graphics with text. (My own pages, a canvas; my text, marching graphically down the page). Matherly's work raises questions about the nature of narrative.

A self-taught artist and daughter of a Southern itinerant preacher, Matherly was raised alongside holy rollers in rural West Virginia. Her work has molted in recent years, shed bright and tribal flash (the artifacts of religion) to occupy non-color, as if from Kodachrome to black and white. The soft, edgeless figures and the elegant shades of paleness in which they reside make a peaceful scene. Except, of course, for the nails.

The nail strokes (if one can call scratches made with nail tips strokes) aggravate, even disturb the soul of the canvas, just as words from the scripture are crossed out and amended. Not rewritten but refashioned, edited to fit this particular parchment. In Proverbs 16:23, 24, among the interplay of bodies, pronouns are adjusted,



DIANNA MATHERLY, HEBREW 11:1, 2001

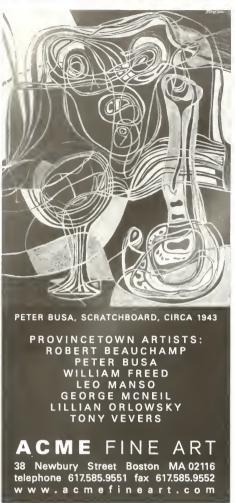
grammar is let go, his becomes the plural their. (If you believe . . . you believe He died for everyone). And like the scripture citations with their grandiose titles delineated with sections and numbers, Matherly scratches the date and time of each completed work into the flesh of the canvas, putting the nail strokes in context.

Several of her most recent paintings read as parables though they are absent of text. In "You and I" (14 by 60 inches), a tower-shaped canvas cradles, at its base, a boat with two nestled figures. The boat is small, almost insignificant, in the face of the soaring sky. But the figures are not lost in the expanse. Serene and undaunted, they dangle their arms over the edge of the boat, letting a hand slip playfully beneath the surface.

Having battled cancer twice since the age of 21, Matherly rests squarely in the center of her faith. Now at 36, she is a serious student of scripture, preferring to draw on the inclusive Amplified Bible to the more fundamental teachings of her childhood. There is nothing cynical or ironic about the expression of her beliefs in this work. Rather, it boasts a heightened optimism.

Like her figures, Matherly is held by a belief in the relatedness of matter and the interplay between what holds us together and what keeps us apart. Not simple, or clean, or even naïve. Her primary tool, a nail.

KARIN COOK is the author of the novel What Girls Learn (Vintage), which won the American Library Association/Booklist Award, was adapted as a feature film for Showtime, and was nominated for an Emmy Award. Cook received a 2001 New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA) award in nonfiction for work published in Provincetown Arts and Double Take Magazine.

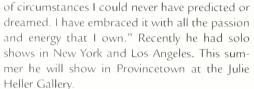




David Eddy

BY JIM TYACK

avid Eddy taught himself how to paint, and very soon became grounded in the mainstream of contemporary art. A well known artist from California saw some of his early crayon and chalk drawings and encouraged him to try painting on canvas. Eddy had been a roofing contractor for 25 years. At the age of 46 he picked up the brushes and knives and went to work with acrylics on canvas and wood panel. Now he has been painting for about 7 years, with great success. Eddy says with wonder and humor that his painting was a gift, "the result



His semi-abstract, figurative compositions are full of raw energy and emotion. They are charged with tension and naïve sophistication. The New York Times described his work as "notably reminiscent of Paul Klee." With deceptive ease, he allows us to enter his work, his world of private meaning. These paintings in acrylic or oil, usually on wood panel, project an enigmatic self speaking through narratives that embody a steady parade of curious figures, some whimsical, others bordering on the grotesque, figures that emerge from the paintings as though in a dialogue with each other. Startling gestures emerge from surfaces that are worked at, layered, and textured,

I'm not sure if the precarious images in his work help to reunite the fragments of his real world, his history, his collective experience, but they do immerse us in a sense of order no matter how chaotic they appear. Perhaps they begin in a dream, a flash of something forgotten, or some signal from the depths. In the actual execution of the work, those lucent memories suddenly rediscovered are again vividly realized, made visible again. We get to live there inside them for a moment, seduced by their formal strengths, by the lusciously subtle backgrounds, the complexity of line and texture.

The artist's interest in exploring the relationship between abstraction and figuration is evident in each of the paintings; his intuitive internal logic and the declarative power of the painterly



surfaces transform the figurative elements. Still, beneath their elemental lyricism and whimsy lurks a darker vision, a strange beanbag yo-yo yellow kite Barbie doll apocalypse fuelled with raw imagination. He gives to his experience a blinding clarity and appears to abstract the world of facts and events into interior reverie, splaying his life of the senses on the canvas. His titles tend to be simple descriptions of the everyday, yet the paintings themselves fiercely communicate a primal vision.

His depiction of figures in a group, adults and children, perhaps a family on an outing, a child with a kite or tugging a boat on a string at the shore, is more than a representation of suburban or rural domesticity. When I spoke with him about his show in September at the Jan Baum Gallery in Los Angeles, I asked him what painters influenced him, "There are painters today that I love and whose work I know," he said, "but when I started painting there were really no painters influencing me. I just started painting and responding to images that emerged and that pleased me. They were quirky and identifiable to my sensibilities . . . what I thought was cool."

Unfettered by influences, Eddy brings to his work these primordial images, and though there are painters with similar visions, it is obvious that his paintings are extensions of his self. And they are cool.

JIM TYACK is the author of a book of poems, Mayhem and Disorder (Proper Gander Press, 2001)







The Fine Arts Work Center Visual Arts Fellows 2001-2002

Provincetown Art Association and Museum

BY CHRISTINE MCCARTHY

ast fall when I was approached by the Fine Arts Work Center to mount an exhibition of work by the current fellows at the Provincetown Art Association and Museum, I was thrilled by the prospect of showcasing contemporary art by some of the area's most promising artists. After spending the past seven years at Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art, I was looking forward to conceptual creations and installations that would challenge the viewer, as well as provoke powerful aesthetic responses within the gallery space.

The works of Eric Conrad, Jenny Ding, Eric Hongisto, Elliott Hundley, Yun-Fei Ji, Maryalice Johnston, Victoria Neel, Lamar Peterson, Miyoung Sohn, and Bethany Springer created an energy that invaded the entire museum as visitors moved from the Richmond Gallery--boasting works from the permanent collection--into the Murchison Gallery as if they had entered a different universe

The viewer was welcomed by Bethany Springer's *Untitled Cutouts*—suspended structures that were constructed with vinyl, foam, wax, and plexiglass. The grid-like compositions echoed a repetitive order and gave the six-foot sculptures a weightless quality that almost defied gravity.

Elliott Hundley's "At the Slopes of Vesuvius" and "The Lake" featured thousands of cutout photographic body parts and magazine images, each individually pinned to a large piece of foam. The precision and repetition of this process drew the viewer in and allowed he or she to develop a narrative based on the small parts that were contained within the entire collage.

"Red Thread Veil" and "Stage One," installations by Maryalice Johnston, graced the walls with red thread, beeswax, sponges, and wire. The result was an elegant web accentuated by bursts of color. As in Hundley's work, the methodical, rhythmic repetition was evident within this assemblage of common objects. All

three of the above-mentioned approached their work with a fixated exactness and orderliness.

Eric Conrad, Jenny Ding, and Lamar Peterson exhibited on a more figurative level using a variety of media. Conrad's untitled mixed media constructions included doll-like figures grafted on to one another. Unlike Hundley's cut up body parts, Conrad chose to sew them back together as if one figure was growing out of another. Jenny Ding's intricate egg tempura paintings and point pen on silver paper drawings--"The Taste of Apple," "Starry Night," "Twiner," and "Chrysanthemums"-examined human relationships, desire, and sisterhood. The Beijing native incorporated traditional Chinese lore with mythology and personal experience. Peterson's series of Family Portraits was painted in a flat, popular illustration style similar to that of Kerry James Marshall. The portraits symbolized everyday experiences and memories like photographs from a family album.

The range of work exhibited, from painting and sculpture to installation and collage, offered a fresh approach and explored themes such as



It was a true pleasure to collaborate with the Fine Arts Work Center and it is my hope to designate a Visual Arts Fellows' exhibition as part of PAAM's permanent exhibition schedule. An important aspect of the Provincetown Art Association and Museum's mission statement is to present the work of emerging artists, although the credentials of these artists suggest everything but emerging.

The intensity that this exhibition evoked producing high-impact techniques on a low budget is a clear indicator of the success of this exhibition in and out of Provincetown. The FAWC exhibition has benefited from the enthusiastic response of the artists to the exhibition and their generosity in sharing information and ideas. I am particularly pleased that so many of the artists felt inspired to create new works or sitespecific installations for PAAM. I thank the artists for creating contemporary art that challenges the art of our time.

CHRISTINE McCARTHY is director of the Provincetown Art Association and Museum





CLOCKWISE PETERSON, BETHANY SPRINGER INSTALLING HER WORK, HUNDLEY; **PHOTOS** COURTESY JIM ZIMMERMAN

AN ROTT STATES

Blanche Lazzell

Overlooked Modernist

BY SHIRLEY MOSKOW

o many artists have been rediscovered that it surprises me more people know don't about Blanche Lazzell," says Barbara Stern Shapiro, curator of special events at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Shapiro spent almost two years assembling the MFA's featured spring 2002 exhibition, "From Paris to Provincetown: Blanche Lazzell and the Colored Woodcut." She also wrote the exhibition catalogue, which sets the artist in the context of her contemporaries, early 20TH century Provincetown printmakers, by reproducing some of their woodcuts as well as Lazzell's dazzling images.

"I am working for color values, form relationships, rhythm of movement, interplay of space and sincere expression," Lazzell wrote in the copious notes that document her work. But because she regarded her art as a process, she rarely commented on technique and her use of the "white-line" woodblock print, which B.J.O. Norfeldt had introduced to the Provincetown art colony. Also called the "Provincetown Print," his one-block method separated colors with furrows that produced white lines.

The white lines temper Lazzell's sharp geometry so that her flat, Fauve-colored woodcuts reflect her great affection for the Lower Cape. Houses nuzzle against one another in a patchwork of abstract shapes. The Atlantic's swells seem soft as down. A passionate gardener, she imagined riotous petunias and red carnations more lavish than any that appear in nature. And her people, whether fishing, tending their lawns or merely gazing out to sea, are rendered with serene purpose.

Lazzell, who died in 1956 at age 78, is notable as one of the first women to introduce abstract art to the United States. Yet, in reviewing the Boston exhibition—the 122 objects on display include paintings, ceramics, and rugs in addition to woodcut prints and her radiant wood blocks—the *New York Times* called her "a perennially overlooked American modernist." Soon that may change. After the Boston premiere, the exhibition travels to The Cleveland Museum, from May 19 to July 28, and then to the Elvehjem Museum of Art at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, from September 7 to November 3.

The Provincetown Art Association and



BLANCHE LAZZELL, *MY WHARF STUDIO*, 1932, COLOR WOODCUT THE NEWARK MUSEUM

Museum mounted an exquisite addendum to the Boston exhibition, titled "Loeb and Lazzell: Women on the Edge of Modernism, "curated by" James Bakker, an expert in the period. Christine McCarthy, director of the museum, said, "It is fitting to organize a companion exhibition since Blanche Lazzell had been showing regularly in Provincetown over the last four decades. Her first inclusion in an exhibition at the Art Association was in 1916. She is finally getting the recognition she deserves as a premier woman artist very much ahead of her time."

Lazzell was 37 years old in 1915, when she first arrived in Provincetown, then the largest art colony in the world, and took painting classes with Impressionist Charles W. Hawthorne at the Cape Cod School of Art. However, the West Virginia native had long since committed her life to art. After attending the West Virginia Conference Seminary, South Carolina Co-Educational Institute, and West Virginia University where she earned degrees in art history and the fine arts,



BLANCHE LAZZELL. EARLY DAWN, 1933, COLOR WOODCUT, COLLECTION LESLIE AND JOHANNA GARFIELD, MFA BOSTON

she moved in 1907 to New York to study with Kenyon Cox and William Merritt Chase at the Art Students League.

Chase, a master of still-life painting, "scared us stiff," recalled Lazzell, "however, his criticisms were favorable." Georgia O'Keeffe was in Chase's class, too, but there's no indication that she and Lazzell befriended one another. Perhaps the age difference—Lazzell was nine years older-separated them.

After New York, Lazzell returned home to Morgantown, West Virginia, to continue her study of art and to work in ceramics. When her father died, she became restless and in 1912 went abroad. The independent artist traveled by herself extensively to view art in England and Europe. Settling in Paris, she enrolled in the Académie Julian and the Académie Moderne. She also found companions among Ethel Mars, Maude Hunt Squire, Helen Hyde, Anne Goldthwaite and Florence Upton in the radical circle around Gertrude Stein. During this time, too, she most likely became familiar

with the paintings of Georges Braque, Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso and other modern artists who were working in France.

Like many Americans living abroad, Lazzell returned home on the eve of World War I. In 1913, she opened an art school in West Virginia. Barely two years later, however, she left for Provincetown, where many of the women artists she'd known in Paris already had settled. She remembered that first experience of being in Provincetown as "delightful . . . everything and everybody was new. Creative energy was in the air we breathed."

The vibrant art community fed her artistic curiosity and introduced her to the technique of the Provincetown print. Her daring images also inspired others. Soon the group started to gain national attention and, in 1919, the Provincetown printmakers, including Lazzell, exhibited at The Detroit Institute of the Arts. She made her first museum sale when the Detroit Institute purchased her print, "The Blue Jug."

Although an illness when she was 16 left Lazzell partially deaf, it never deterred her from either teaching or taking classes. And, as her reworked woodblocks indicate, her creative investigations never ceased. In the constant search for new avenues to explore, she returned to Paris in the 1920s for lessons with cubists Fernand Léger, André Lhôte, and Albert Gleizes. Gleizes, especially, had a profound and lasting effect. Because of her limited French language skills and her hearing difficulties, he wrote many of his instructions for her, and she consulted them again and again over the years.

She returned to the United States in 1925 and Provincetown a year later. From then on, except for visits to New York to see new art and to study with Homer Boss, an organizer of the

1913 Armory Show, she spent most winters in West Virginia and most summers in Provincetown. She dubbed her Provincetown home overlooking the busy harbor her "fish-house studio." It was among her favorite subjects, too. The building, crowned with four, second-floor windows, prominently featured an old rowboat in the side yard and a black basketball hoop stand in front. Neat on the outside, it was piled high with her work materials inside, and served as the classroom where she supported herself by giving art lessons. Her historic studio/house was torn down this year to make way for new construction.

Continually refreshing her art, she became a student of Hans Hofmann. Also, since she frequently made changes to a woodblock, experimenting with shapes and colors, she wrote, "I now call them woodblock paintings. They are really paintings and not to be considered with other things they call prints."

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, Lazzell, like Eudora Welty, Walker Evans, and many others, created some of her best work for the federal government, working primarily in the poor coal-mining region of West Virginia, where she'd been born. The Public Works Art Project hired her at \$26.50 a week, but soon reduced her pay to \$23.85. In 1938, she wrote, "Still have the WPA job and have created 76 prints for Uncle Sam and 10 oils." For 14 weeks she painted a mural of the Monongahela River that is now at the Morgantown Public Library. Her masterful 1936 woodcut print of "The Monongahela at Morgantown" is included in the current exhibition.

Galleries in Provincetown, along with public and private galleries in France and this country, recognized Lazzell's talent. The Corcoran Gallery and The Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.; Rhode Island School of Design and the Los Angeles Museum; the Museum of Modern Art, the Brooklyn Museum, and the Whitney Museum in New York have exhibited and often purchased her art. Still, her work remains relatively unknown. "From Paris to Provincetown," however, is by far the most extensive exhibition, putting her work in context alongside prints by Norfeldt, Chaffee, Hopkins, Mars, Loeb, and other Provincetown artists.

"Blanche Lazzell broke new ground in her prints, making original forays into the realms of Cubism and Abstract art," says the MFA's Shapiro. As the result of a generous gift by New York collectors Joanna and Leslie Garfield, the MFA now claims the most complete collection of Lazzell's work, including her colored woodblocks. This exhibition, Shapiro adds, "explores Lazzell's role as a major contributor to the woodcut and to the welcoming of modern art into America."

SHIRLEY MOSKOW, a freelance writer based in Lexington, MA, writes on culture and travel.



George McNeil Abstract and Figure

BY PETER SELZ

n 1929 George McNeil saw the Museum of Modern Art's opening exhibition of Cézanne, Gauguin, Seurat, and Van Gogh. It opened the eyes of this talented 21-yearold. He had taken art classes at the Brooklyn Museum and was enrolled at Pratt Institute, a conservative school of applied arts at the time. Then, after studying at the Art Students' League and having done paintings in the Cubist manner, he joined the Hans Hofmann School of Fine Arts in 1932. In this, the most advanced art school in the country, he became familiar with the concepts and praxis that activated modernism. He learned about the work of the Fauves and the original Cubists, as well as the early abstract expressionism of Kandinsky, whose breakthrough to abstract art was admired by Hofmann. McNeil met like-minded painters such as Mercedes Matter, Lee Krasner, and Georgio Cavalon and became an assistant teacher at the school, teaching collage as well as painting in the master class.

In 1935 McNeil worked with James Brooks and Willem de Kooning on the WPA art program, and in 1936, together with other Hofmann students, he became a founding member of the American Abstract Artists (AAA) group that set out to make a place for abstract artists who found themselves in a double bind: the New York dealers did not exhibit abstract art; and the crucial 1936 MoMA exhibition Cubism and Abstract Art paid no attention to the Americans. George L.K. Morris, one of the founders and patrons of AAA, stated: "A number of artists united in their desire to show what America was producing in this locally uncharted territory, began to organize their activities." The group was actually international in its outlook, including artists such as Albers, Léger, and Moholy-Nagy, who were residing in America. McNeil's "Still Life with Orange Square" (1935) is fairly typical of AAA paintings in its tendency toward geometric abstraction. In McNeil's canvas the hard-edged shapes, differentiated by color and texture, are disposed in keeping with Hofmann's teaching as they allow the three-dimensional forms to adhere to the two-dimensional plane. A similar work, "Composition with Red Forms Dominant," was one of the few abstract works exhibited at the New York World's Fair in 1939.

Several rapidly sketched ink drawings of 1936 and 1937 are predictive of the artist's figurations that occurred some two decades later. By the late 1930s and early '40s McNeil's abstract paintings, done in a limited palette, became increasingly

organ and fluid in their construction. Nature forms are at times suggested in these works, done in many layers of pigment, painted with a broad brush, and often scraped. Beginning in 1950 he exhibited at the Vanguard Gallery of Charles Egan, the venue of the first exhibitions of de Kooning in 1948 and Franz Kline in 1950.

In 1948 George McNeil was appointed to head the evening school at Pratt and was able to invite his colleagues Adolph Gottlieb, Philip Guston, Jack Tworkov, and the sculptor Reuben Nakian to teach there. McNeil continued teaching at Pratt for more than 30 years and many of his students have acknowledged their debt to his stimulating and articulate instruction in art and in art history.

The paintings of the 1950s (when McNeil summered in Provincetown) are characterized by strongly textured materiality and density; they led to a masterwork, "Black Sun" (1954), in which a black orb, surrounded by a large red ring is suspended in a heavily painted orange ground above a loose structure of abstract forms. It is worth noting that

this painting, shown at Egan in 1954, predates Gottlieb's paintings of circular forms, his wellknown "Burst" series, by several years. During the later '50s McNeil's palette became lighter, his brush-work more feathery and some of his abstractions tended toward landscape themes, possibly influenced by his stay in California where he was teaching at Berkeley. The artist began to paint some of his canvases on the studio floor in order to be able to work freely, while viewing the development of the whole picture.

In the 1950s the New York art world was engaged in a fierce battle between abstract painters who had assumed the avant-garde and figurative artists who were considered peripheral and retardataire. When de Kooning exhibited his wildly expressionist paintings on "The Theme of the Woman" at the Sidney Janis Gallery in 1953, many of his fellow action painters felt betrayed. At that time Clement Greenberg told de Kooning, "It



is impossible to paint a face," to which the painter replied, "That's right, and it's impossible not to."

In 1959 the Museum of Modern Art included some of de Kooning's "Women", as well as Jackson Pollock's introspective and mysterious black and white figurations together with Europeans such as Jean Dubuffet and Francis Bacon in its exhibition New Images of Man, curated by myself. There was, as expected, a good deal of protest against the reintroduction of figuration. The influential critic Thomas Hess, a great champion of abstract expressionism, observed, however, that "the new figurative painting which some have been expecting as a reaction against abstract expressionism was implicit in it from the start and is one of its most lineal continuities." At about the same time, many of the Hofmann students-Jan Müller, Larry Rivers, Robert Beauchamp, as well as George McNeil among them-turned toward figurative abstraction.

Starting in 1960 McNeil exhibited at the prestigious Howard Wise Gallery, which, under the direction of the brilliant Douglas Macagy, pioneered in showing kinetic, optical, and light art. But there were also solo shows of important painters, and I recall seeing some of McNeil's new canvases in which the human figure made its appearance. The artist himself explained that, "I didn't know when starting a painting whether it would turn out abstract or figurative." It all happened doing the process of doing, which Harold Rosenberg had in mind when coining the term "Action Painting."

A painting such as "Mediterranean" (1960) is still an intensely felt and forcefully painted abstraction, while in "Nassau," painted the following year, the image of a nude woman is clearly discernible. With the figure McNeil felt that he could "get down to the very basic drives of sexuality and fantasy." Many of the paintings from this transitional period and later seem like symbolic transformations of his experience as man and painter. In a work like "Beach

Scene" (1968) the artist permitted himself to give free reign to a wild pictorial imagination. The female figures, mostly long dancing legs, dominate the scene, while a mask of an expressive head prevails in the lower area. The paintingdone in strong reds, Prussian blue, and absolute green—has a strength of color contrasts not seen in the painter's earlier work. Bathers and dancers now occupied much of his activity.

In 1971 he completed "Bather #23," an aggressively advancing naked male figure without head, painted in arbitrary colors, while the female "Dancer #22" of the same year is an image of a coquette, which reminds us of certain paintings by Matisse, except that the French painter would never have painted a hand as distorted as the one in this picture. We also think of Emil Nolde in a painting such as this, or in the wildly expressionist "Enigma" (1973), a truly delightful picture of a brightly colored person sticking out his tongue. Rather child-like at first glance, this is a painting of great satirical sophistication. Then, starting in the late '70s, figures seem to fly through space. In 'Appearance II' (1979-89), a turbulent work of great energy and almost Dionysian frenzy, bodies, heads, and hands seem to be arbitrarily arranged on the canvas, but the apparent randomness of the work establishes its own order.

These paintings of fractured and disassembled figures were picked up by the art world of the 1980s, as they seemed to pre-figure the neo-expressionism seen among young German, Italian, and several American painters who came to the fore at the time. McNeil certainly benefited from this chance encounter with neo-expressionists. Between 1981 and 1995, the year he died, he had 13 solo exhibitions in New York and elsewhere and assumed a special relevance for younger artists. Like those of his confreres, McNeil's paintings



HERE'S LOW THE DRUE 1949 OR 1950 CAPE COLL

seemed to deal with the absurdity of the human condition, but since these paintings are based on McNeil's humanist background and sense of continuity of the artistic tradition, they maintain a unique sense of pictorial authenticity.

His feeling for the free play of sensate energies enabled him to transform his delight in the vision of urban life into coherent pictures such as "Demimondaine Disco" (1984) with its huge inverted green head, surrounded by agitated dancers, or "Bettina Belter" (1987), in which an undefinable large object holding a microphone flies across a golden sky. George McNeil never set foot in a disco, but he knew what was going on and must have had great fun painting it.

He did look at television and all his life he had loved the syncopation of jazz. Back in 1966 he had written: "One wonders how Michelangelo and Rembrandt would react if they were catapulted into the visual excitement of our time, not only of jazz and the movies, but to the sensate excitement given by moving electric signs and tremendous billboards." By the 1980s the constant and inescapable impact of visual images of every kind had increased to a point at which theorists taught that it would no longer be possible for an artist to make adequate meaningful responses to this extreme and dizzying overexposure of visual images. But, far from going along with the theories of the Anti-Aesthetic, as proposed by individuals such as Jean Baudrillard, George McNeil proceeded to put his personal mirror to the pandemonium and to transform the panoply of visual excitement into canvases of multitudinous images. In a single painting we might see full figures, disembodied head and legs, hands, hats, animals, buildings, crazy cars and just wheels, bottles, scratchboards, letters, numbers, and watches to remind us of the time. All these objects may be arranged in apparent disarray, but they are held together by the artist's innate sense of structure.

In the early 1990s, in the artist's final paintings, images become more limited in number. In "Courtship" (1993) a large object—is it a lady's high-heeled shoe or a penis?—is placed on a blue sky-like ground and in "Decision" (1992) a large female in fishnet stockings and huge profile head approaches a large African mask that is suspended next to the long sexy legs of a woman in the left margin of the painting. As in so many of McNeil's paintings, as in modernist art in general, the interpretation is left open to the engaged viewer.

In 1987 George McNeil, then 79 years old, participated in an exhibition entitled, Elders of the Tribe. I recall seeing this show at the Steinbaum Gallery in Soho. Nobody's work looked as fiercely youthful as George McNeil's.

PETER SELZ, a distinguished art historian, curated "George McNeil: a Retrospective" this summer at the Provincetown Art Association and Museum.

Nora Speyer

BY CHRISTOPHER BUSA

aving spent a warm January morning at the Outsider Art Fair in SoHo, I took an easy stroll to Prince Street and arrived after lunch at the studio of Nora Speyer and Sideo Fromboluti. Here I felt a strange sanity, a harmony rather than a scream of schizophrenic pain.

Her show this summer at the Provincetown Art Association and Museum will be held in the gallery reserved for living artists, displaying 17 carefully selected paintings going back 40 years.

an easel and two full white walls with pegs protruding for hanging canvases in progress. The room is cluttered in areas with finished paintings and drawings used as a standard and reference for work in progress. Metal carts with rubber wheels splattered with paint, struggle, overloaded with tubes of paint and quivers of coffee cans stuffed with brushes in turpentine, creakily moving from wall to wall, easel to model as needed.

On the balcony floor Nora sat me down before her exhibition wall and from the racks had her assistant John McGraph, a young artist at the Art Students League, place paintings on the pegs. My guess, judging from my half of the heft, as I occasionally helped him, is that the typical painting weighted about 80 pounds.

"You don't see how heavily painted they are," she points out. "I work the surfaces a long time. Paintings take months of paint, and the months are my plague on painting. Trying to re-invent the



ORA SPEYER, FLOWER STILL LIFE, DETAIL, 1994

Speyer's studio mate is her husband Sideo Fromboluti. She works in the south side of the 80-foot loft and he haunts the north. Neither artist trusts the uneven "natural" light of the city and they both work under strings of 150-watt light bulbs overhead. They occupy the top two floors of a four-story former factory building, which they purchased in 1972 with two other artists. The wreckage was turned into four handsome studios. Speyer and Fromboluti cut away part of a floor, creating a high ceiling and a romantic balcony. Naturally this space became Nora's, because, her husband says, "She needs the expansion. I grew up in a tiny room."

The second floor they retained as common ground for storage and office space. A waist-high rail rims the east side of the upper floor, and one looks down upon her studio, the footprint virtually square. A cot for resting occupies one corner. There are a few chairs. Otherwise the huge space is spare of anything but a focus on work. There is image in abstract expressionism, I developed my concept of the figure."

In the '50s and '60s Speyer painted an Expulsion series depicting Adam and Eve, sometimes with the serpent. Historically we associate the serpent with the female. She, not he, was tempted to explore, and that caused humans to be expelled from Eden. Guys do not so much blame women as remind them of the simple fact of their transgression, documented in the Bible, hardly mentioning what actually they did to cause all this trouble.

She declares she is not interested in the Bible per se: "I am interested in the grand theme of the past that reveals deep conflict in the present, much of which, without our understanding, is deeply felt."

In these paintings the snake is rising, writhing. She is deeply convinced that the snake represents desire, hovering above them, but she refuses to be limited from expressing other sexual connotations. Getting old hasn't made her work less senA R. T. S. T.

sum a good way to measure the force of her work is to weigh the paintings, hefting the material itself as physical experience.

EROS #1 (1975)

Here we have a dream image, an attractive couple sleeping. Two dreams intertwined, what unites them is an impersonal snake, a symbol from literature and art, standing wide-awake and curled in the air above the sleepers. The image of the myth glows like a beacon; the skin of the couple is serenely meditative. Plus the woman has an appealing curvilinear form, undoubtedly a vision of the artist herself.

"I try," she says, "to develop my own concept of a woman, my own way to model the figure, trying to pull the painting together symbolically with color and form to reveal something of myself."

When she was a little girl growing up in Pittsburgh, her bedroom wall, among many mementos, was the place where a framed etching was the focus of an adolescent shrine. It was the work of a German artist, Stucks, depicting a snake. Now she sees the work only seasonally because it hangs in her summerhouse in Wellfleet. She loves the idea because it reveals the reference of her environment, and she included the icon in the famous Long Point exhibition, "From the Studio Wall," where the 13 members of the cooperative displayed images they saw at a glance everyday while they concentrated on their work. Pinned to their telephone walls, these postcards, photographs, letters from nephews, and childhood totems were suddenly recognized as revealing, and that is why the group decided to exhibit them. Three of the artists looked daily at postcards of Piero della Francesco, where Christ is flayed while the scholars talk about it.

"You have these objects around you," Speyer says, "very personal and intimate, so it informs you, you pay attention to the influences upon your inner self. Fritz Bultman had wonderful chairs made from horns, remember that? And he did curves all the time in his paintings. That's interesting! In Stucks' work, I don't know if you know it, a woman is standing nude. This big black snake wound around the woman, oozing around her body. The head of the snake rests on her shoulder, looking at you."

I say, attempting to be witty, that the snake seems to function like a gargoyle: as protection to the woman rather a threat to the woman. But Speyer only loves the way the curve of the form changes the painting: "Plus the fact I like certain strong emotional configurations."

Sometimes the snake in her painting will have its mouth open, suggesting that women may be supposed to have some evil seductive power.

COLORS

Spever works hard on her colors. What is her aim? she did not want to be too realistic in her modeling, and she loved the glow of the yellows that make color look like a wet form in nature, what speyer would call *plastic*. With all that activity in

her painting, the picture plane yet is very solid.

The pressure in the '40s was to keep the picture plane more compressed than the Cubists did. Space is rolled flat and forms are pushed forward in a very shallow way, peaking toward you, teasing the viewer with a tangible sense of relief. Relief, in a culture of flatness, was a potential transgression. Speyer says her work expresses that theory and that her forms are "very close as far as space goes; that man does not go far back, and the background pushes forward."

The issue of relief brings up the issue of her thick surface, heavy paint, layered with built-up oil paint like a topographical map. She does not argue with her desire for thick paint, "so sensual, tactile, exciting."

This desire presents an interesting contradiction. The flatness of the picture is revered, then turbulent texture is celebrated, as if mountains were OK as long as the earth is flat, not round. My suspicion is that texture is crucial because of the way light strikes a rough surface, breaking the plane into shadows divided between dark peaks of blackness, and depths where light shines in the darkness. The shape of doom in Speyer's painting, reprised often over the years, is a frayed blanket, a rag of colored clouds with wonderful contours. Her atmosphere swallows her human subject and the peace of sleep becomes a daily comfort reenacted as eternal conclusion. "Even if no one knew this were an expulsion," she is confident, "there's something emotionally overwhelming about the impinging dark mass."

For years Speyer and Fromboluti drew weekly in their studios with Jack Tworkov, Joe Stefanelli, Philip Pearlstein, Ann Arnold, and Mercedes Matter. Neither Nora nor Sideo ever attended Hofmann's school, but, as Nora says, "We were very involved with the form pushing and pulling. For example, this form would come over this form, which is in front of this form. This is trying to reverse it. Reinvented space reinvents the world."

EROS #2 (1977)

This painting is proof that Speyer is working with atmosphere as a single hue, rather like a color field. *Call me Study in Red*, its lustful color shouts. Here the artist shows how she can take the same theme and change the mood. She likes the way darkness of the shade envelops whole figures, holding them like slices of fruit in colored gelatin.

In this painting the snake looks very content on the woman's cheek, nuzzling in a soft pocket. The guy looks like he's had it. I like his levitating hand, a dream hand floating up. In hypnosis, one's hand will rise involuntarily, as you watch, listening to the hypnotist's suggestion. The thought makes the action happen. One of the things about dreams is that if you wake up, if you move, the physical movement will destroy the reality of the dream. As the blind Milton said, after dreaming of his dead wife: "I woke, she fled, and day brought back my night."

For a moment I have trouble seeing, and I say to Speyer, "That snake is green, isn't it?"

"There's a little ochre in it," she says, "but



the range of color is great."

Tremendous intensity resonates in a web of two essential colors. In terms of the reductive value abstraction offers, Speyer yet treasured her love of the figure, and this love kept her from becoming a non-objectivist.

She will not speak of that era in the late '50s, but Sideo says, "It was bad then. There was a rise in anger. Philip Pavia's magazine [of the proceedings of the Club], *It Is,* fanned the quarrel. He came up to me in a friendly way, you know, being Italian, and said, 'Politically, you're on the wrong side.' We were always on the wrong side."

Speyer says, with a touch of pride, "We're still on the wrong side!"

DIALOGUE

One topic, part of the subject, is the dialogue that Nora and Sideo share, over a lifetime, and the way their work talks back and forth to each other. This is not something that began when they first met.

They were just art students back in Philadelphia. Nora remembers, "We loved to talk as people, but we were still learning how to draw, how to paint. The war was a big shock. I was doing a mural in Kansas at the Officer's Club, so depressed being in the Army, the last place in the world the artist should be. Nora, who was with me then, worked in a photo shop next to the camp, Fort Riley." After the war they came to New York where they found the excitement and strong presence of the abstract expressionist movement. "We embraced the creative direction, but we could not leave the use of our subject."

Nora put it this way, "They don't see this as an abstract expression, but the foundation of the painting, the freedom and the attitude, is what is. Abstract expressionism is a school."

"It's more than a school," Sideo said sharply, "it's an *idea* penetrating the senses in fresh ways."

The reality remains that all the abstract expressionists possessed a figurative base. From-boluti once told me that he saw Rothkos every evening when he looked out his wide studio windows, seeing the atmosphere of the sky divided

AN RITHS S

into dusty windowpanes of exquisitely blended hues. Motherwell in his *Elegies* dwelled between the oblong shape of the bull's gonad and the tall hard black rocks, dolmen-like, that squeezed this other elemental power.

The question we are pursuing is how pop and hardedge abstraction denied the impulse at the core of abstract expressionism. Those who worshipped at the altar of the Cedar Bar regarded painting as an action that is at once a spiritual act, like drinking a shot of whiskey for inspiration, and not a crass effort at opportunism or wiseguyism.

ADAM & EVE (1978)

These figures, following chronologically, show much more interest in the modeling, perhaps because they were drawn from a model. The artist pursues a more rigorous realism and still retains a sensory feel in her surface. By reducing her figurative elements to the couple and the serpent, she isolates her opportunities for relating figure to field. Each painting, while echoing earlier work, expounds separately with unique solutions to painterly problems. Speyer often uses the word we in speaking of her or his work because, she says, "on a deeper level it doesn't matter that we paint separate subjects." After viewing a few paintings one realizes this is a dangerous problem that moves back and forth, straddling, without resolving, definitions of abstraction and realism.

They share a penchant for painting human forms that are larger than life-size. Scale takes on personal relation to the viewer. "One thing about a big painting," Speyer says, "is that you get the big form and that gives you a very powerful structure. It makes the form stronger and more potent to look at."

When I look at a figure, I especially pay attention to how the face is handled. So much energy collects in facial expression that a tiny thing, the shape of a cleft on the tip of a nose, can change the portrait in a way that an incident on another part of the body does not. Here the faces are not the central part of the image, and the visages are not drawn with enough detail to arrest attention and draw strong energy to the face. Avery's face was a blank oval. Speyer's is muted with a chameleon facility for blending, like a snake, with its surrounds. The figures are not separated into personalities but united by their trauma. My sense is the couple is moving forward into mature knowledge.

"Whatever it is," Speyer says, "it is a moving painting. I don't mean moving in the sense of real movement. The clasped hands and the feeling of her face looking out at the abyss, movement not in the sense of movement but of emotional overtones."

The clasped hands remind Speyer of a painting by Charles Hawthorne in the collection of the Provincetown Art Association and Museum, a dark velvet portrait with hands so white they seem lit by a spotlight. All the dark energy of the painting resists the gravitational force of the white spot; in the tension between light and dark, light does not illuminate darkness, nor

does darkness dampen light.

In Speyer's painting, Adam is not Sideo and Eve is not Nora. Adam is too Anglo-Saxon to be Fromboluti.

EROS #3 (1980)

In all these paintings the light, the luminosity of light, is dominant. They are heavy paintings, glazed over and over. The atmosphere has tangibility like air, a clouded clarity that connects and separates us from what the painting reveals. The atmosphere dominates. In Fromboluti's early paintings of belly dancers there is the feeling of looking through a smoke-filled room to see the figures dancing. Speyer's atmosphere does not involve you in the process of looking through something to see something else. Instead, the surface is itself the atmosphere.

Speyer is not a literary person and she does not read books about the Garden of Eden. She says, "I like a strong intellect in my work. I like people to remember the image they look at. As they remember the best paintings of the past: *Mother Mary*, or the *Three Thieves on the Cross*. I like to have that found image as a symbol for one's memory. I believe a painting has many layers. You can't just have the element of the story to make it worthwhile."

The colors in this painting possess an eerie light; the atmosphere of the light is eerie. Colors are something Speyer stumbles upon. She doesn't just say, "I'm going to do a yellow painting." Instead, like any abstract expressionist, her adventure is to discover the dominant color among the competing colors, among the other suitors of her attention.

Speyer's frequent practice is to arrive at two essential colors, each possessing inflections of the other via more minor colors. Thus, through subtlety and attunement to fine discriminations, she reduces her palette to an essential dialogue. If we had to name the colors here we might call them a combination of lemon yellow, strange mauves, and blue/green. A study of warms and cools, the surface is very inflected with glossy accents, and that raises the temperature. Except for "Study in Red," none of her paintings pay attention to primary colors. The glazing creates the sense of luminosity. Unlike a lot of contemporary painters, Speyer is not working with a simple plane of one color against another.

EROS #3 (1980)

The shape of the canvas, the frame in which the artist is working, requires the artist to resolve her use of the space, and especially whether the rectangle is vertical or horizontal. Many of Speyer's vertical paintings use the figure horizontally. The serpent here hangs in the air, in the shape of a cloud, above the couple, so satisfied they seem ready to die. Oddly enough the snake, floating like smoke, reminds me of the risen hand hovering in an earlier painting. The snake is now a protective spirit for the couple who, in their sleep, have returned to Eden.

A Latin term from literary criticism, used often in discussing Milton's *Paradise Lost* is *felix culpa*: the fall of Adam and Eve was ultimately fortunate, since the compensation of knowledge was not so bad.

DEMONIZING SPIRIT (1982) ANCESTRAL MEMORY (1984)

Here the serpent figure changes into an owl-like bird. The woman is sleeping alone, the demon spirit literalizing the internal nightmare that is written in the anguish and turbulence on her face. Speyer insists she does not dream however much she paints dream images. That, for her, is the whole idea. While working, she feels the loose and free feeling of dreaming, which she would not be conscious of were she asleep. So simply painting gives her intense pleasure.

She thinks, because "overtones are vital," it is crucial to "expose the psychological in one's work."

When her mother and older brother died, Speyer painted their memory, with the living woman being near the dead. They spread the motion of the living as they express emotion. If Speyer at times refers to herself as a mannerist, her chief example is the hands she depicts with such poignancy.

Fromboluti works 15 feet from the model, wanting distance not close scrutiny. Speyer draws three feet from the model. Two models have walked out on her because they became self-conscious and couldn't stand the intensity. Speyer doesn't care. She does not talk while working. She talks to the models when they are dressed.

Looking at the feathers in this painted bird, the paint itself is feathered in fine, point-like projections. (The only artist I know who paints as thickly as Speyer is Milton Resnick.) The bird's claw comes down at a central point in the canvas, with a rhythm in its weapon.

THE STRUGGLE (1985)

Speyer doesn't want the non-necessary to be the form. She wants her paintings to read from top to bottom and across without deep space. The woman here draws upon Speyer's earlier series, very sympathetic to the dreams of young people in the '60s, of thin hippie girls in despair.

FATE (1993) HOVERING DEATH (1994)

"Hovering Death" replicates the situation of having the observing figure, whether owl, snake, or eyeball of a knot in the tree, represented. A skull can stand for a face.

"Fate" is from a series called *Time and Space*. "People gather," Speyer says. "Fate is laughing at them. They don't know what's going to occur in their lives." Centering her anxiety is the adolescent problem of security and fear, something she never forgot as she evolved into a mature woman.

CHRISTOPHER BUSA reviewed Bert Yarborough's paintings elsewhere in this issue.

Whitney Biennial 2002 Be Careful What You Wish For

BY MARC J. STRAUS

his is my biennial, I thought on an uncommonly warm early March Sunday afternoon, as I hurried past the long snaking queue along Madison Avenue, membership card in hand. The Whitney had finally followed the recipe I had urged in my previous reviews--use their considerable resources to scour every corner of the country and find worthy new talent. Find that young sculptor in Podunk who hasn't been picked up by a gallery in Chelsea, and even more important. one whom I don't know. And judging by this crowd, word was out that the exhibit was excellent. Indeed, Holland Cotter's piece in the Friday Times (quickest story out of the blocks) was a gentle, largely descriptive, and mostly positive piece.

Positive press is not something the Whitney Biennial has enjoyed for a very long time and they might have savored it because soon thereafter the critiques in the New Yorker, Voice, and Times would again label the event bland, undemanding, irresponsible, bad taste, and pretentious.

I have generally found biennial reviews unnecessarily caustic but sadly, this time correct. The biennial is an enormous disappointment, dull and inconsequential. There is precious little here of significant quality and nothing nothing whatsoever that I would want to own. That's mostly how I look at it. As a collector the final benchmark for me, price consideration aside, is whether I would buy the work, and to do so I have to strongly intuit that the work is not only exceptional, but that it will likely continue to engage me. That to have it in my space, to walk past it every day (videos aside), will be pleasurable because the work never stops speaking authoritatively.

What happened? Larry Rinder, the Chief Curator, seemed equal to the task with his northern California pedigree and prior biennial experience as well as his intelligent and timely "Bitstreams." And unlike so many previous biennials the choices weren't made by committee, which always had seemed to result in confused, compromised, and anemic shows. He alone apparently chose the paintings, sculpture, and photos and others helped select the video, performance, and internet-based art. He had indeed scoured 43 cities in three months including Detroit, San Juan, and even Buffalo and perhaps two-thirds of the artists he chose were unknown to me. Moreover, the overarching promise of the exhibit was include work outside the system and to manifest that by expanding the definition of museum wor hy art. He sought works that "lie beyond the pale of the contemporary art world" and wanted to open the door "to the possible richness of a truly expanded view of artistic prac-



DUATTARA WATTS; CREATION OF THE WORLD, 1001, MIXED MEDIA

tice." Rinder loudly trumpeted in the catalog, that his mission was to follow "one's own heart and to speak one's own mind as directly and honestly as possible." Heaven knows that many previous biennials were mired in insider politics, in predictable Chinese menu choices, in satisfying so many constituencies that the final product lacked any originality and heart.

I soon discovered that among the artists working in the more traditional art forms, I knew far more than I had realized. The equation had been skewed because I knew none of the Internet artists. Second, many who seem outside the museum system are very much in it. Pierogi Gallery in Brooklyn, very much in the thick of the current contemporary system in Brooklyn, for instance, represents two artists. Third, and most tellingly, quality is sparsely in evidence.

Trenton Hancock, a 27-year-old artist whose work I had first seen in Dallas, then in the previous Whitney Biennial and more recently on W. 57TH Street at James Cohan Gallery, has skillful brash idiosyncratic mixed media canvases. Offputting was the hefty wall text: "Hancock's art revolves around a personal mythology of epic dimensions." So too Judith Schaechter's stained glass in light boxes are original and well rendered. Peter William's neo-surrealistic canvases are unremarkable, as is Lorna Simpson's video of lips humming. Devastatingly difficult and eerie is A. A. Bronson's huge photo of Felix Partz taken hours after Partz's death. Both Partz and Jorge Zontal had died of AIDS. Along with Bronson, they had worked as the group, General Idea. The photo was particularly heartbreaking for me because I had known them in the '80s.

Julie Moos who shows at Frederick Freiser in Chelsea, has straight head-on photos of a poor black woman next to a rich white woman, a punk kid next to a rich kid. You get it. It makes for an interesting discourse but as a collector it's over for me after one take. Jeremy Blake's (Feigen Gallery) 16mm film of a house overlaid with Morris Louis-like abstraction coloring quickly wears thin. Collier Schorr's (303 on W. 22nd St), provocative but middling work, includes 28 color prints of a German school boy superimposed into Andrew Wyeth's erotic Helga series.

Many of the artists on display are in fact wellrepresented by mainstream galleries: Arturo Herrera, Vera Lutter (huge B&W photos), Hirsch Perlman, Chris Johanson, and all five with works in nearby Central Park, among them Roxy Paine, Kiki Smith and Keith Edmier, whose undersized statues of his two German grandfathers in army uniform are strong. The best known, Vija Celmins has two B&W small wonderful paintings of spider webs. Up-and-coming sculptors, already well collected, Rachel Harrison and Evan Hollaway, are both engaging. Harrison has a stucco-like black wall in which is embedded a small photo of Elizabeth Taylor. For those of us in the hunt, her work this April, which I've seen at Arndt and Partners in Berlin, is better. Hollaway is clearly L.A., with imaginative use of materials and structures.

From San Juan, Javier Cambre's half of a poor beachfront kiosk morphed with a new structure, and Chemi Rosado Seijo's "El Cerro Project," are less than graduate school level entries. Then Tracy Morris's poetry performance (very African American) heard with headsets. Pretty good poetry, but I don't see (hear) the point. Moreover, why one poet? Why this one and as a poet I don't think this biennial crew is well equipped to make this choice which seems, (especially next to the San Juan installation), a toss to diversity.

Finally Tim Hawkinson's (very well-known artist), motorized moving face and Lazzarini's tilted phone booth are little more than entertaining. On the other hand, Janine Gordon's photos (Paul Morris on W. 23RD St.), of various young men's subcultures are worthy of follow-up.

Included are four large paintings by Outtara Watts, who is originally from the Ivory Coast. I have seen very little of his work heretofore. Gagosian, no less, last showed him in '96, and he is slated for the upcoming Documenta in Germany. At his best he captures the earth, color and grittiness of his Africa, even and especially its music.

Christian Jankowski's video made at ArtPace in San Antonio, is clever, showing a televangelist preaching to a live congregation about the miracle of art; the great artist is a creator. Leanos' "Remembering Castration" devotes much devotional-like space to an insipid installation. There is a lot of weak work, including Gerry Snyder's biblical canvases of Lot, Forcefield (mostly loud and colorful), Gispert's photos of cheerleaders and Killgallen's purposely outsider-like amateurish wall text and cutouts. There are very few examples of painting, among them John Zurier's, with very tame fairly monochromatic canvases, a throwback to Dan Christensen, vintage 1972.

It has taken this Biennial for me to realize that I was wrong. The exhibit that I had wanted just isn't possible. This biennial is a worthy attempt that broadened the search and to their great credit, did not play to a constituency. But the end it is still about the system and no amount of even good faith effort to work outside this system is likely to succeed. Suggesting they have achieved such uncommon ground is naive at best. They took their visit cues, to Minneapolis and even Buffalo, from those in the system. I am in the system. What I hear, who tells me, and who sees and knows what I have done - it's part of the system.

I have a case in point. Recently I was introduced to one of the largest art studio communities outside the New York City-Brooklyn axis, (and L.A.), in nearby Peekskill, NY. One hour from Chelsea are over two hundred artist studios. The quality of course varies. They are largely artists who for better or worse, make little attempt to enter the system. In contrast, I have visited upstarts in small studios in Brooklyn getting looked at by substantial galleries and collectors because of which building they are in and who they have befriended. That takes thought and motivation and doesn't denigrate the art they are making. What they have done consciously or not is attempt to position themselves in a narrow world I know well.

Which begs the question-if this biennial remains mostly insider why are the results so uninteresting? Because I have now also come to understand that with such a show sustainable quality is unachievable. In this never-ending thrust to find the best at their youngest (a very American focus), they must fail. Neither Rinder nor anyone can fill any significant portion of the museum with highquality youth-made things. It simply doesn't exist except for the rare artist who achieves great maturity so early: Picasso, Johns and Barney. Were the Whitney to have chosen Rothko, Pollock, Lichtenstein, and Newman, in their 20s or even 30s, the results would have been as dismal.

Is this youth-fest the proper mandate for so prestigious a museum? The answer is a resounding no. Few young artists are ready for prime time. It gives them critical confirmation when they may be too impressionable and haven't yet found their voice. Furthermore, to paraphrase Roberta Smith (Times), the present exhibit results in a disservice to the public.

That said, I am obliged to suggest some alternatives. For youngsters, sculptors Tony Matelli, (trained in Detroit), life-like pushy self-studies, and Bonnie Collura, with surrealistic-like figures. Painters: Kevin Zucker (still in graduate school, but wouldn't qualify because shown by Mary Boone!), John Pylpchuk and David Korty, from L.A. Slater Bradley, a 26-year-old video artist. But for my money you can include Matthew Barney (already 35) any time. Older: another Shirin Neshat video might seem a bit too much, but good is good. Tom Friedman's incredible painstaking sculptures, Donald Moffett's new paintings (it's been a long haul for him). Louise Bourgeoise, who just turned 90, continues to do great work.

My new prescription is as follows: The biennial must continue to broaden its search. To see more is always of value and from time-to-time they will find a new pearl. They must be scrupulously independent and above all they must choose only work of great merit at whatever the age of the artist. The best of the moment is always exciting and enlightening.

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Bert Yarborough: OK Guy

BY CHRISTOPHER BUSA

"THE GRID IS LIKE THE SEA; YOU CAN FISH IN IT"

ert Yarborough, for 25 years, has worked in a resolutely abstract manner, as if only abstraction could reveal the higher mysteries of visual art. Trained as an architect, skilled at precise drawing and formal rendering, he left the profession when he realized that the journeyman architect was the instrument of his client. His life changed when his first wife gave him a camera. The quickness of the photograph contrasted with the labor of drawing, yet the image retained the echo of actual history, lost time revealed.

Yarborough arrived at the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown as a fellow in 1976, thinking he was a sculptor. Instead of putting his work on a pedestal, so everybody knew it was a piece of sculpture, he put his pieces in the woods, high in

the branches of trees or floating on cranberry bogs, where nobody could tell his bundles of sticks were made by a man. A bird or a storm could have built his sequestered sculptures, accessible only by foot across a half-hour of soft, sliding sand, deep in the dunes off the outer curve of the Cape. Yarborough's initial mode of documentation was not the object but the photograph of the object, the token of the real thing. People could view the photograph while standing on the swept floor of a gallery; they did not have to walk into the dunes.

Learning architectural drawing in a rigorous five-year program, he habituated himself to making repeated marks on graph paper; the grid, inevitably, became an unconscious reference that organized the relation of the object to the world. His sense of space required that the focus of the work be isolated in a small field that could stand for infinite space. At the Work Center, Yarborough absorbed the aesthetic of Jack Tworkov who said, "The grid is like the sea. You can fish in it." Such an artist casts his net upon nature and captures what is not small enough to



escape the confines of his mesh. Tworkov, Yarborough believes, came as close as anybody could to making live emotion emerge from a logical structure. Yarborough's was a contemporary investigation into the relation of the natural world to the mathematical world.

About six or seven years ago, Yarborough

AT R. T. S. T.

decree: that there were certain things he wasn't able to do, that he could not get at with simply the level of abstraction that had centered his work so far. Impulsively, he decided to see what happened when he started including the figure, putting it into the work in every conceivable fashion.

Using the figure abstractly without at the time thinking about the content or psychological implications, but simply using the figure the way he made a simple mark, has been his postabstractionist mode. Of course, he admits, "Once you create the image, you can't deny the implications of the image. I'll start with a very small idea, and just start laying down paint, marks, and I'll follow that as much as possible, without imposing a psychological dictate. Yet I get all these things coming out of it."

CIRCULAR BREATHING

The fact Yarborough has found a process to produce work that surprises him is confirmation that his compulsion to include the figure was artistic and purposeful, releasing rather than suppressing energy. "I think that goes back to the abstraction I was doing," he told me last fall at his Allerton Street studio, a few days before he was obliged to return his son Sam to high school in New Hampshire. A sleepy street that should probably be closed to traffic, Allerton is a child's playground, with hopscotch blocks marked in chalk on the blacktop and basketball hoops set in a driveway wider than the street itself. Yarborough's studio sits in a sunken area, damp with nearby wetlands. He works in an old garage for a single car, now flooded with window light and cleansed with the clarity of whitewash splashed on rough boards.

While Yarborough likes to paint with long, loaded brushes, he also loves making drawings with very structured markings, drawings that draw on the ritual of drawing, the act of making a succession of marks until the pattern becomes cellular, organic as the texture of bark. Returning from a Fulbright in Nigeria, Yarborough, who worked beside a master Yoruban wood carver, began to make an intense series of ink drawings. He heard the echo of the Yoruban drums, their firm, brawny tone, and he wondered at the way the drummers used "circular breathing" to play without pause, much as his own drawing seemed to follow audible rhythms. His impulse was to take the content out of the work and go back to its structure. Could he work simply with the underpinnings? Those exploratory drawings reflected sculptural activity in terms of marking, picking up sticks, activity that, purposefully meditative, becomes ritualistic. He felt, he said, that I had a very good facility at making marks, and Hiked that. But I wanted more. I wanted to challenge myself more, wanted to see. I had never done the figure before. It was leaping into this place. I felt I had to do it and when I did it felt right. I started out doing very graphic, small, acrylic washes, almost like watercolors that were about 12 by six or seven inches. I did hundreds. Lots were African influenced."

Three or four years ago, Yarborough and his

wife Cynthia Huntington, began to spend more time in Provincetown, coming back to the area on a regular basis. Huntington, a poet who teaches at Dartmouth College, was a Work Center fellow when she met her husband during their concurrent fellowship years. It is said that Bert and Cynthia coined the term "bedfellows" to point to the artist/writer collaborations that the Work Center has fostered far more effectively than any commercial dating service.

The couple spend a lot of time by the shore. Yarborough has made hundreds of beach drawings over many days at Herring Cove. Sometimes the whole family will go. He says, "what I like to do normally is go in the morning and walk down toward Hatches Harbor, spread out and plant my umbrella, and just sit there and draw-water, the cover of the landscape, Hatches Harbor. They were abstract mark-making studies. After Herring Cove, I had a desire to do bigger paintings of the West End Breakwater. It is such a great object." A long line of granite blocks, dropped six decades ago by the Army Corps of Engineers, the 20-foot wide path goes bullet-straight to the horizon line a mile away. This stern line is the solid path that Yarborough loves to traverse.

Yarborough believes that "the notion of perspective is alive between marsh and water, where distinctions intersect. The presence of the lighthouse in the environment is spectacular. I would go there, and walk along the breakwater, laying out all this stuff while weighing them down with stones to keep them from blowing away. I did hundreds of drawings. Ink drawings on rice paper. Regular sketch pads. I'd take about five or six sketchpads. Small, medium, and large: all very good paper."

In a sampling of these drawings, here is Cynthia, there is Napi, the restaurateur whom Yarborough found walking alone in the forlorn natural retreats that Yarborough is drawn to. Yarborough drew the seagulls and the few people, trying to better his drawing of the figure, that organic thing observed alive in nature. The drawings, done with a brush, where scratchiness dominates the softness of horsehair, are all about gesture. A favorite of mine, like a Lester Johnson drawing, depicts a dragger submerged in the harbor, where the rhythms of its ruins are like wharf pilings that endure forever.

Yarborough, for a long time, painted with quick-drying acrylic. The floor-to-ceiling installation of drawings he showed last summer at East End Gallery were all acrylic. Then he went back to oil because of the "bounce" he got when working on canvas or board. Every mark he could make with acrylic, the same mark in oil jumped to another level.

He can work on a canvas for a year, then wipe it out in a nanosecond. He discovers as quickly that the wiping out, the scratching, the removing, exactly reveals the pattern of his labor over much time. "When you build up a surface," he says, somewhat surprised, "certain things start to happen." Even if Yarborough feels his building up and bundling marks into something as solid as dry sticks, this effort at gathering, this work of

bundling and mark making, is only preparatory.

He accepts the concept of incremental advancement without being hostile to exponential advancement where his career might take off like a rocket. "Incremental is fine," he says. "That's one of the reasons we come back here and spend the summers. I see a ton of work, I talk to people all the time. People visit my studio. I spend a lot of time with Paul Bowen and Jim Peters. Jim is a natural, with everything right out of his head. When I draw, I might as well be doing it with my teeth. I've gotten better, incrementally, but I don't think I'll ever be a competent academic draftsman. I've only tried to be honest, energetic, so what I'm doing rings true. Coming here when I did, at 30, brash with the arrogance of youth, I might have said, 'What the hell are the those old farts doing?' Now I treasure them even as I am moving into their age bracket. As I've gotten older I've become less attached to my opinions. In one's 20s and 30s your opinions about art become divided as life and death. That is the way you form your work."

Jim Lechay passed away the day before I visited Yarborough in his Allerton Street studio. He was in his 90s, on a respirator, still painting. When Yarborough was a graduate student at Iowa, Lechay was teaching drawing. "More than anything about Jim I remember he and another drawing teacher, a guy by the name of Paul Fracasini. They both taught at Iowa and every day they walked across the bridge spanning the Iowa River, separating the art buildings from the Iowa Student Union, where they would go to lunch. They talked about art and painting and drawing. Sometimes they had big arguments. "The more I saw Jim's work, the more I began to understand about painting, especially drawing, which is the underpinning of his painting. At his show in '97, I saw a painting of a red nude. That was the wonderful thing about moving from abstraction to the figure."

A small shift in orientation opened unbelievably another world, capable even of containing still life as a vital subject. A key element in Lechay's work is his penchant for gray, a neutral color that allows him to use a tiny spark of color, a chip of red or a haze of blue shadow, that bleeds into the neutral its ghostly hue. Gray is a vampire color, thirsty for living color. A little red goes a long way to make a Lechay painting jump to life.

THE OK GUY

In 1999 Yarborough had a show at Merrimack College in North Andover, near Phillips Academy, a small college with a brand-new gallery. The director, David Raymond, head of the art department, inaugurated the gallery with Yarborough's show and wrote an incisive essay about the artist's new figurative work. Raymond explored the idea of the figure as mark, precisely what Yarborough, since he started painting the figure, was attempting to deal with.

With a spare line, Yarborough achieves expression as keen as a cartoonist; one figurative

work, "The O.K.Guy" (1999) stands like a pinnacle upon a pile of rocks, naked save for a pair of short red pants not styled enough for the streets of Bermuda. In the outstretched palm of his left hand, the scrawny figure, no doubt a self-portrait, holds a safe surface for a small bird to perch. Except, examined, the small bird is a mere checkmark, where the ascender rises with a flourish into a tail. Here figure and mark meet. This evocation of gesture attracts Yarborough as much as the compression of abstraction.

He does not miss architecture and he has never built a house, though he has designed some. But he values his training for teaching him how to make straight lines, to draw slants and slashes that are clean and consistent. For his early drawings Yarborough put a magnifying glass on the tip of the pen creating a huge surface of vibrating marks.

Another shape, like a teardrop, appeared in many early works that he began right before he went to Nigeria. He had been looking intensely at African masks and other forms. When he got to Africa, he purchased a mask of a hornbill, a strange and wonderful bird, sacred to a lot of African tribes, not just in Nigeria. The mask he bought, which he still has, is oval shaped, with the hornbill dropping down. "If you stylize it," he says, "it becomes a teardrop. I put that shape in lots of paintings that I did in the '70s and into the '80s, done on grommet-edged canvas panels. It became a multi-faceted form that I was able to make into a head, a body, an object."

The impulse to disclose one's signature to oneself is a truth as transparent as a teardrop, something we do everyday, unconsciously, while talking on the telephone or doodling on notepaper. The doodle is what you do when you forget yourself. Sometimes Yarborough will do elaborate doodles, flooded with an influx of calligraphy. His beach drawings reflect his effort to extend the line into the figure, trying to make the figure and the mark come together. He knows that Asian cultures believe that a mark is a reflection of your character. It gives off a part of one's character. Yarborough has an ongoing series of paintings on paper that he calls Character Studies, with conscious double meanings: character as in calligraphic character or character as in a person's character.

Making marks is a way of getting into the painting: "Instead of sitting there, dumb, I just make dumb marks. Do something. Act. Push the surface around. Activate the surface. See if something's going to happen. It's become, for me, a way of breathing with paint. Mark making, laying it down, activating the surface. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. Keeping it fresh, and not becoming a device, is a juggling act."

CHRISTOPHER BUSA profiled William Phillips elsewhere in this issue.

Albert York

BY MILES UNGER

hen critics proclaim, as they have done periodically for the last few decades, that painting is dead, it is the kind that Albert York practices that they have in mind. Not that the works they wish to consign to the graveyard necessarily look like this, but they do the kinds of things that York's paintings do so supremely well. That is to say, York's paintings are paragons of that medium's virtues and seem blithely unconcerned that the pursuit of such old-fashioned pleasures-of the eye as well as the mind-will consign them to the dustbin of history.

York seems to positively wallow in irrelevance. Were one completely unfamiliar with his biography one might assume he had lived and died sometime before the middle of the 20th century, a contemporary perhaps of Arthur Dove or Milton Avery. One can imagine him hanging out at a Greenwich Village bar sometime before Pollock & Co. shook up the sleepy New York art scene, discussing the finer points of his craft with likeminded artists steeped, as he evidently is, in the early modernist tradition of Bonnard, Vuillard, and Matisse. The truth is that York is still very much among the living, though, now in his 70s, he no longer paints and is by all accounts something of a recluse. He seems to have slipped at least a generation from his proper place in the chronology. Armed with that knowledge his paintings seem all the more eccentric, a matter of willful refusal to cooperate with the imperative to "be of one's time." We look at these paintings with the same eyes we look at Cézanne, Manet,



or any master whose art is all about what happens inside the frame, seduced and absorbed by the interplay of paint and image. A painting by York draws us into one of those privileged moments of heightened awareness that good art can open up in an otherwise ordinary day. The painting appears to have been turned over, slowly, in the mind of its author and our experience of it unfolds at an equally leisurely pace. This is not an art of quick takes but of luxuriant unfolding.

There is a languor to all York's paintings, a feeling a sensuous plenitude. "Two Reclining Women in a Landscape" recalls Courbet's "The Young Ladies of the Banks of the Seine," with its equation of sensual flesh, fecund nature, and the erotic act of painting. Also erotically charged is "Seated Woman with a Stork by a Pond in a Landscape," which seems a slightly eccentric retelling of the classical tale of seduction, Leda and the Swan. York's erotic charge lies less in the theme—he manages to elicit a similar frisson from a vase of flowers as from a female nude-than in the merging of perceptual, imaginative, and physical elements that characterizes sexual experience.

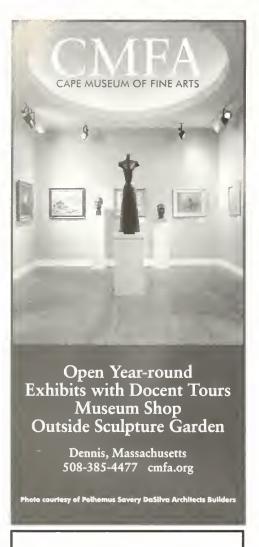
If one defines the erotic as a conspiracy of eye, mind, and body with the aim of giving delight, then all York's paintings seem involved in such illicit pleasures. But York never succumbs to mere

sensual indulgence. His visual intelligence and command of his tools is such that these works never seem flaccid or merely pretty. There is also a darker current to some of these paintings, a feeling of ominous foreboding. Works like "Black Bull Standing in a Landscape" and "Twin Trees" recall Albert



ALBERT YORK ABOVE: LANDSCAPE WITH TWO TREES AND A RIVER, 1962; LEFT: TWO RECLINING WOMEN IN A LANSCAPE, 1967 COURTES) NIELSEN GALLERY

ALR. T. S. T



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51 Sandy Rand Road, Lincoln, MA 01773 781 259 8355 www.decordova.org Pinkham Ryder's visionary canvases, with their sense of nature distilled to a pregnant, portentous moment. Sensuousness has turned to overripeness, an oppressive heaviness like the atmosphere just before a thunderstorm breaks.

Despite evidence of great sophistication-an intimate knowledge of art history and impeccable refinement of craft—one might almost classify York an outsider artist, so little does his art intersect with the fashionable concerns of the moment. Who these days can still paint with a straight face a cow standing in a field or a vase of geraniums against a simple monochrome background? Aren't these exhausted forms, capable of being taken seriously only if they archly undermine their own premises or if created by someone isolated from contemporary life through poverty or mental instability? The fierce competition among collectors for York's few available works, and the large sums of money they are willing to spend, does nothing to shatter the illusion of his outsider's status, since what collectors prize in the outsider is the sense of an authentic experience unavailable in most of the savvy, art-school-derived art made today.

Of course authenticity is suspect these days since so often it is really the ersatz variety of products, like the "authentic home-made taste" of packaged food. But the authenticity associated with York's paintings has little to do with their maker and everything to do with the quality of the experience itself. In fact if one were to measure authenticity by the extent to which the artist remains ignorant, "uncorrupted," by the art world, I doubt York would pass the test. York's refusal to adhere to fashion seems less a matter of compulsion than an acknowledgment that the issues that agitate the current art world simply do not interest him. Standing in front of a painting by York one has the novel sensation—novel at least in today's art world-of direct contact with the work itself, unmediated by theory, uninfected by irony. Everything is there on the canvas: the textures and hues of the paint describing a simple scene; the play of line and plane; the formal values of the painting and the beautiful succinctness with which it captures a real experience of the world.

To claim that this sort of experience is no longer valid is to claim that we are no longer capable of taking pleasure in the play of sensual experience or that this pleasure is somehow improper to our current mode of being. Either proposition is a frightening denial of the connection between mind and body. It is merely the contemporary version of the puritanical suspicion of sensuous experience. Art that isn't operational, that is apprehended by the mind only through the mediation of the senses, is considered self-indulgent. Also, such art doesn't lend itself to critical engagement since its meaning exists only in direct physical contact with the work itself. Resistant to words, except in the most obvious descriptive sense, painting like York's inevitably falls outside the critical discourse that defines today's art world.

York usually surrounds his paintings in wide

black frames of slightly distressed wood, emphasizing the chasm one must cross-physically and mentally-to get from the real world to the privileged world of image. York's somber frames seem mock funereal, slyly hinting that perhaps claims of painting's demise might be a tad exaggerated. But the frames not only separate the fictive world of the painting from our quotidian reality, they also form a bridge to that reality. Their painterly and sculptural presence turns the painting into an object, just another thing in a world of things. The mottled, grainy frames fall, perceptually, halfway between the world experienced through touch and the world experienced through sight; they mediate and negotiate the exchange. Their textured surface, both forbidding and attractive, emphasizes the three-dimensional actuality of the painted surface, inviting at least a visual caress. The frames themselves feel "worked," carrying on a conversation with the painted image and emphasizing the mutual dependence of sight and touch. York also establishes the physical presence of the painted surface by working on panel or Masonite, which allows brushstrokes to sit atop the support, rather than being absorbed within it.

It seems a mistake to pin a lot of heavy-duty theorizing on works of such simplicity and modesty. York, I imagine, would make no sweeping claims for his art. But the fact that no theoretical framework is required to understand these paintings is in itself a refreshing change from the norm. In place of absence, York insists on presence-the direct confrontation of viewer with physical object. The success or failure of these paintings has nothing to do with what they are about and everything to do with the quality of our experience. There is no arguing with those unreceptive to York's paintings, just as it is impossible to argue with those unmoved by blandishments of a fine Bordeaux or the seduction of raw oysters. One can urge, perhaps, a greater refinement of palette that would force the taster to share our pleasure, but no amount of preparation can ensure that the experience will be enjoyable. Explanations and descriptions are wasted and seem beside the point. There is a tendency to dismiss experiences that resist quantification and classification, those of the senses rather than the intellect, as belonging to a lower order. What we say about such experiences can offer, at best, but a pale ghost of the original, making them almost invisible to a media-saturated world. They are unverifiable, like a natural phenomenon unrepeatable in the laboratory. Such phenomena, because they are unavailable to the methodology of science, disappear from discourse. It's as if they didn't exist at all. But for anyone who has stood in front of a painting by Albert York, the delight and profundity of the encounter are very real.

MILES UNGER is the author of The Watercolors of Winslow Homer. The former managing editor of Art New England, he is a regular contributor to the New York Times.

ARTItalk

An artist statement is the verbal expression of a visual artist. It may be a remark written on a scrap of paper and pinned to the studio wall, where it may remain for daily guidance. It may be any expression the artist believes is authentic. Often it is a motivational credo connected to the artist's desire to do the work in the first place.



TRACEY SANDFORD ANDERSON

Painting is the core of my life, the place of selfconfession, examination, and discovery. The progression of my work is the most focused part of each day and I do whatever it takes to move my ideas forward. I feel a heightened sense of reality when I'm working and I go directly to the canvas with a minimum of preliminary planning. All my thoughts are there, in the painting. I believe that hard work, constancy, and creative discipline produce work possessed of its own integrity. Working with painting necessarily demands risk and a willingness to experiment, to expose oneself to failure, also, it provides the surface where elusive elements form something visible. As a painter, I am rarely comfortable writing about my motivation or giving voice to the inspiration behind the work. I paint to truly know what moves me. After that, the paintings speak for themselves.

CHUCK ANZALONE

The same painting can have a different meaning to each person who views it. I try not to analyze the subject but to convey a mood, happiest on location when light and shadow give me a perfect composition. With every attempt, something is learned.



BOB BAILEY

My work often stumbles into narrative, yet the implication is there from the start. Whether it's a sledgehammer wallop or a palette on a platter, one can ride straight to table and knife through color to course. Inside stories separate the viewer from the jumbled room or the extended landscape. Under overhead lights one stands solitary in temporary calm. The situation has a presentation of artifact about it, and sometimes just time, shape, and line.

ROBERT BIRBECK

My new work is a group of wall relief scuptures paying homage to art that has inspired me. Here the Three Graces pay homage to the French postcard.



CID BOLDUC

Life is pretty crazy. Amazing technology, terrorism, 200 TV channels. Too much! One seed planted bringing forth a single sprout and blossom from line, color, and texture, all so simple.

PAUL BOWEN

I grew up in a seaside town in Wales and have lived and worked near the waterfront in Provincetown for 25 years. My sculptures are constructed from driftwood, fragments of fish boxes, old barrel tops, or weathered planks, collected from the beaches near my home. I use very limited means, such as stacking, piling, and simple carpentry, so the sculptures appear to be flat across or torque away from the surface of the wall. I also use the shape of a fishing boat, either gouged out of panels of wood, cut out of fabric, or stenciled or drawn. In recent sculptures, the boat-shape appears as a wedge or doubles as an element of carpentry.

GAIL BRYAN

My photographs are about reflection and mining memory, allowing time to assimilate experience. Chance encounters with words, connections with people and places, loss. When I take pictures, I work with levels of experience, and I shoot what I experience rather than what I see. I don't know if I'm aware in the moment of the layers I later find in the negatives. Dormant insights may grow. They derive what meaning they have from abandonment of control I learned growing up in east Tennessee, a place where the land is seductively beautiful and powerfully present, where rocks and storytelling are still alive.

BREON DUNIGAN

My work is inspired by, but not limited to the human form. I look for beauty where one least expects to find it. I look closely at things we don't want to see, the things that make us uncomfortable and try to find some beauty there. The work is primarily made of hydorcal plaster incorporated with "found" objects, such as lamp parts, legs from cast iron stoves, and various components scavenged from old furniture. The found component often suggests a human or animal form and inspires the shape that sculpture will take. I enjoy returning "legs" of furniture back to animal form. I often find myself working with the idea of human body as vessel, exploring its many orifices and growths. Irony and a sense of humor are important to me.



MIRIAM FRIED

A painting is abstract when it is impossible to recognize in it the slightest trace of objective reality of our everyday existence. One must penetrate a subject in order to paint it.

ANNE GILLEY

Living in the Berkshires where the hills can create an illusion of multiple horizon lines, stacked up and layered, I like to explore tensions between foreground



and background, spatial constructs and flatness. Working on aluminum panel, I juxtapose painting and drawing with industrial materials, using reflective surfaces to make formal relationships change with the light. Wire mesh can appear sharp or flimsy. Paint can be translucent or dense, ethereal or active.

LINDA OHLSON GRAHAM

Has the time arrived when each person may realize how simple it would be to shift the earth's



vibration? Teillard de Chardin created the word "noosphere" to describe a layer of thought that surrounds everything with a thinking envelope. I believe, intentionally, by quieting our mind a few minutes a day, our reflections would reflect back upon ourselves, our understanding quieted by love.

ARTtalk

L. A. HECHT

'Aromas' is the title of a series of larger-than-life studies of fruits and flowers. The title stems from my effort to use art to stimulate not only the eyes, but all



the senses. I like to enlarge and celebrate detail with a wild palette contrasting commotion and focused tranquility. I value the words of a Native American poet, Pola, who wrote about my painting of a tulip: "She a blast . . . every color you want / she explodes / Just don't ask her to stop." I am in awe of the handfuls of heirloom seeds passed down from generation to generation, the miracle of an eight-pound watermelon that grew from a featherweight blossom, the aromas and healing tinctures that change our lives. I like the miniscule rendered larger than life.

JENNY HUMPHREYS

My work evolved from a desire to leave behind some of the self-consciousness I associated with abstract painting. When I cam to Provincetown on a fellowship in 1993, after painting for 12 years, my chief concern was that my life as a person and my life as an artist were too discrete. In order to make my work more integrated with my life, both in process as well as translation, I turned to "simple" media like sewing, knitting, quilting, and cooking, which I had learned as a girl but set aside for "fine" art in college. Lalso began to use written language. I've continued experimenting using varied media from artist books to performance, photography, and sometimes painting and drawing, taking traditional craft media to develop personal work with feminist themes. My family's history influenced my identity and my work: I am a 13th generation white American who is eligible for DAR and FFV (First Families of Virginia) membership. My ancestors varied from Puritan ministers and militia members to a Salem "witch." I use recipes, quotations from literature, especially the Bible, and my own words, embroidering them on dresses, flags, quilts, and aprons. I write them in books, on walls, and in drawings. I speak them in performance or on video. Who, or what, dictates a self? Which pieces of family, history, art, literature, media, religion, shared experience, folk life, ambitions, disappointments, and work can be called me? I do my work to better understand the form my self takes. I continue to be surprised. Hearn from my audience, who share my themes and that informs my work as well.

ROBERT DOUGLAS HUNTER

We strive in our early years to learn our craft, therefore we search for a master teacher who has demonstrated this in his work. During this period of intense study of drawing and painting we

must also deal with what we want to express. In this pursuit we hope not to be sidetracked in our ambition by the success of those whose work is currently fashionable but of a transitory nature. After these early years comes a long period of growth in the application of skills to pictorial problems. During this maturing process we experiment with many ideas, embracing some for fuller development, discarding others not useful to our creative need. When our work begins to reveal individuality, it is still essential to pursue honest observation, interpreted within the framework of varied compositions of our invention. Falter at this point and we will display mannerisms, inhibiting our growth. This is no small matter. To measure our effectiveness will require the evaluation of an unborn generation.

MARY COTTER HURST

My reactions to space affect how I create art. I react to changes that have happened, and will happen again. Producing my work allows me to record the meaning of my life, keeping memories vital.



JOYCE JOHNSON

Outer Cape isolation is hard to find elsewhere. Even in tourist season one can find pockets of solitude on beaches or the dunes. That solitude I need. The wholeness one senses standing alone on a high dune, observing 360 degrees of gorgeous landscape, has to contribute to finding the basic source expressed in the work. A few miles away is cosmopolitan Provincetown, teeming on Commercial Street, quiet on the side streets, depending on time of day or season. Extreme and in-between, constantly stimulating, do not allow for creative stagnation.

CELESTE LANGLOIS

I am fascinated by the complex simplicity in both architecture and nature. I try to capture the mood of a moment of time.



PEIK LARSEN

My art tells a story about form and light, relationships and the immediacy of material. Hike to combine the action of painting with the life around me and I incorporate accidents and false starts while working images. I am interested in both the physicality and the two-dimensional illusionist quality of a surface. The iconography

of tree, blossom, and figure are as much of an ongoing concern as the space, light, and energy of a piece. I work towards an intuitive balance between logic and emotion.

9

PAULINE LIM

My paintings are inspired by the way children metamorphose trauma into symbolism in fairy tales, close to the darker realms of the imagination, to which children retreat in times of distress. Sickness and recovery, changing

despair into beauty, are goals in my work.

GEORGE LYNDE

I have always been an editor, selecting and arranging from the choices before me: whether in writing, photography, film editing, painting, or even in arranging the knife and fork on my empty plate. My recent paintings show evidence of human intervention in nature, depicted as tender, caressing acts, not as thoughtless affronts to the



natural order: a fine line. My process is slow, contemplative, and obsessive. I find parallels in oil painting for source images I collect with a digital camera. I make clear, simple shapes, balancing the simplicity nuance of color.

PATRICK McCARTHY

I tried my hand at stained glass and fell in love with the medium. My passion is in the design process, with angles and cuts in the glass made only by hand and not by machine.

JEANNIE MOTHERWELL

In our early childhood my father and stepmother (Robert Motherwell and Helen Frankenthaler) encouraged my sister Lise and me to make drawings to go with our poems. My parents, like many, pinned our work to the refrigerator. Helen and Dad also framed some of these mementos, a marvelous validation for me. My collages combine acrylic painting with torn, ripped, or cut images; often they include text, appropriated from poetry and personal conversations, embed-

ded in a shadow-box world. I feel compelled to share with the viewer my introspective daydreams of belonging.





GREGORY MUMFORD

I feel a compulsion to put down what's in my head: every stroke, shape, color combine to make my paintings work. Painting I do in

a zone, automatically, as a way of organizing my thoughts as a compliment to myself.

KATE NELSON

"To be precise, to pare down. Past words, past being descriptive, past the left-brain, snow-job interpreter" (Science News). Like jazz, abstract painting



is born in passion, nurtured in structure, and grown by improvisation. My hope is to make work like good jazz, disciplined yet free, spare yet full, rich in tradition yet achingly personal.

NANCY NICOL



Time is everything, the words torn from an ad and stuck to my studio wall next to a flat metal car part I found and a horseshoe turned up for good luck: these objects remind me to paint every day, to find integrity in the wildest idea. This past year I've studied Cape

Cod doors B.G (Before Gentrification): faded denim colors of peeling paint and those dark, vacant windows with misshapen lace.

RAY NOLIN

On this statement by Edwin Dickinson (1959) I base my hope for a searching world: "That plane relationships are more representable



through comparative value than through implications of contour drawing was a truth that Mr. Hawthorne drilled into his pupils. I think no other teacher gave such importance to this point. His pupils were able to understand and, in time, to perform it quite well. It freed far more people than it bound. His exceptional power as a demonstrator further increased his student's realization of the gulf that separated them from a master. The delighting surprise that they could be stated as perfect spots made us readier to give his advice the trust that paved the way to learning the basic principles he gave us."

RICHARD PEPITONE

For years I made classical fragmented bronze female figures. In 1989 I broke away from the female form toward abstraction of the human figure, assembled out of old oars and other found materials. I wanted to portray both men and women with more compassion, as well as respond to



environmental concerns. I continue to adapt my working techniques until there is little or no waste or consequence to the environment. This vessel was made from a bronze base--perhaps a belt wheel from a fabric mill or from a winch of a fishing vessel. Four new one-half-inch round bronze rods were machined-forged to look like rope. The vessel is the top part of a copper hotwater heater and the copper chain is decoration

is a lamp pull chain.

NICOLETTA POLI

Painting is the art of creating the silent contemplation of the soul adventuring as spirit, visible in the radiant colors of the inner self.

PEGGY PRICHETT

To express my feelings about my work in clay, I paraphrase from Marguerite Wildenhain's statement in her book, Invisible Core: A Potter's Life and Thoughts: I do not aim especially to express myself



beyond the fact that the pot I make should come through the medium of my hands. If the pot comes to life it will naturally convey all I feel while making it. My gratitude to be alive is the source of my devotion to manifest beauty. I aim only to make it well.

ERIKA REBIEWSKI

I explore what happens at the line of demarcation between living and nonliving entities. All my installations make use of a circle and a mirror. The circle is sacred as an ur-form, the innate beginning of all life. I represent the circle as a hole, having learned early in life

that every being needs a hole to climb into: a sacred cave. The mirror represents the line reflecting the two halves animating all life. I make small grottos, shrines, and spirit houses, places of enlight-



ened contemplation. Water is alive with currents of positive energy; together with live plants, these places restore us to the healing action of sensual pleasure. Since nothing is as humorous as sex, some of my fountains have a whimsical quality.

JANICE REDMAN

My work is directly rooted in my everyday experience and my own personal history. My mother is a seamstress and a lace maker; my father restores antique clocks, working in a small shed at the bottom of a garden. The rest of my family worked in wool mills or the steel industry, making tools. I come from a family of "makers," and that is what I do, I make things. Using domestic objects I know and have an intimate connection to, I work intuitively, and in a lot of cases repetitively, where the act of making becomes a personal ritual, a process of revealing what lies beneath the surface of the everyday.

KATHA SEIDMAN

I compose visual stories on flat and curved surfaces. My characters see the world through mirrors, masks, boxes without backs, or windows. bend perspective and



distort light and color to combine the home of daily living with the world of imagination and memory. By time I was 13 I'd visited 23 countries in West Africa, Europe, and Asia. My pictures map my memories of foreign lands, my present experience of globalization as if I had created another time period.

KATHI SMITH

My work concerns natural, organic movement of living forms brought into close-up focus. Color relationships evoke feelings, emotional or physical, based on light, time of day, opacity or transparency of the object. A sense of temporal movement is a key component in balancing my forms.

PHILLIP SPINKS

My current body of work, "Darwin's Predicament," asks a question: Is art a creation of imagination or is an evolution of imagination? The new paintings have strong



elements of the earlier work: intricate color schemes, defining lines, glossy finishes, and my papier-mâché embossed with hieroglyphic marks. In the personal inner world, sometimes one persists; sometimes one loses; sometimes one searches; sometimes one wanders. Life is formed and built while striving for the unobtainable. Art is the collusion of these forces.

STERCK & ROZO

Looking at photos of Indians by William S. Curtis and at National Geographic photos of warriors from the island of Nias (shot in 1931 off the coast of Sumatra), we noticed the similarities in imagery used in the masks and totems made by indigenous peoples, and the masks and faces that appear in our work. They saw the same things we capture. They looked at trees, rocks, and sand—all the things that have not changed and completed the image, enclosed the circle, and mirrored the faces to make believable the spirits they believed in. Native Americans designed totems by lying down on their side next to a pond, gazing at the reflection of trees in still water. Mirroring or double-mirroring a sharp, vibrant image of trees, water, or some other organic form creates our latest work. By mirroring a fragment of nature, the entities, portals, and energies hidden under the chaos of random life. We organize the chaos and reveal what we feel, but can't see. Perfect symmetry and abundant detail, meditative as a mandala, draw the viewer in, depending on the viewing distance, exposing or concealing different faces or symbols. Light comes from all directions at once, and the combined perspectives make the work feel three-dimensional.

GEORGE E. THOMPSON

You might say I am more concerned with form than content. My job is to find in a simple scene the element for a good painting. Sometimes the way an artist says something is more beautiful than what he says.

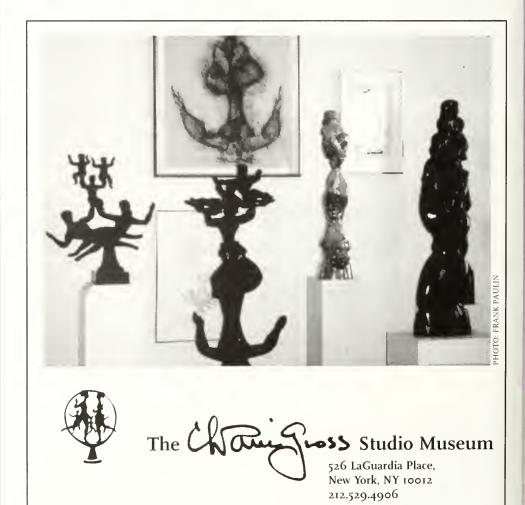


TABITHA **VEVERS**

I used to assume that everyone flew in their dreams pretty much the way I do, arms flapping, just above the treetops. Then I

started asking around. Although there seem to be a number of recurring themes, the specifics of each dream are amazingly individual. My new dreams are on metal as ex-votos (devotional paintings) as a way of giving thanks for the miracle of flight. The text is in each dreamer's own words. Since beginning this series, my flying skills have improved considerably.









TRACEY SANDFORD ANDERSON

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Gifts from Stillness

By Saul Ader

Acorn Press

A man enters the psychotherapist's office. "What's your problem?" the therapist asks without looking up from his notes on the desk. "Nobody pays any attention to me," he replies, turning and leaving.

Saul Ader, a seasoned psychotherapist, knows that people, to grow, require recognition and validation. Our personality, derived from the Greek *persona*, meaning mask, conceals and shields us from one another. Ader's book is a collection of wisdom-provoking thoughts for getting behind the mask, a means of encountering the inner person. He advises, "See the door. Be the door. Open."

Certain of Ader's aphorisms operate in koanlike fashion, seeming to shut down the linear direction of rational thinking, permitting the intuitive brain to reign: "Life is the host, we are the guests." Now we understand why the French language has no word for guest, only for host, *l'hote.* A good guest makes the host feel *chez soi*, and vice versa.

Ader's subtle simplicity can be more illuminating than wordier formulations. A Christian mystic once said, "As you empty yourself of ego, God may become great in you." Ader reaffirms the power possible in the loss of ego: "It is nothing that enriches my soul."

Looking for a certain shell along the shore we are less likely to find it than if we stay open to its sparkle. Then it finds us. The mind of the therapist, like the seeker or the seer, must stay both attentive and free-floating: "Truth cannot be found by seeking it. Still only those who seek can find."

Some of Saul's sayings have the sly way of the Native American Indian who said "Walk a mile in the moccasins of another before you judge him." Ader suggests, "Try the shoes of your enemy. Notice the fit."

MICHAEL A. SPERBER, M.D., is a psychiatrist who works with the mentally ill who are in prison. His essay, "Thoreau's Cycles and Psyche," appeared last year in Provincetown Arts.



With Strings

By Charles Bernstein
The University of Chicago Press

With the publication of *With Strings*, Charles Bernstein adds to a long list of contributions to the world of experimental poetry, a world in which he has immersed himself as the author of more than 20 books of poetry and three books of essays, and the editor of several influential collections of critical writings. Indeed, Bernstein is as well known as a theorist and critic, and with one foot firmly in the academic world (he is the David Gray Professor of Poetry and Letters at the State University of New York at Buffalo), he navigates a smooth and impressive course within both the academy and the community of innovative writers.

As one of the leading theorists of language writing and former editor, with Bruce Andrews, of the seminal 1980's journal L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E, Bernstein makes clear his aspirations for the possibilities of poetry; his stance is, as the poet and critic Bob Perelman has characterized it, "radically democratic" as he argues against normative language and standardization. "There is no natural look or sound to a poem," Bernstein asserts in Content's Dream, a collection of essays. "Every element is intended, chosen. That is what makes a thing a poem." A poem's constructed nature must be emphasized, with its chosen vocabulary and circumscription in grammar and syntax; any effort to conceal this constructedness, with its masculinist groping for "natural" voice and transparency of language, becomes what Bernstein refers to as "the phallacy of the heroic stance."

For Bernstein, who infuses much of his critical writing with poetic forms and tones, and whose poetry is indefatigably political and often expository in tone, poetry should be indefinable, ungeneralizable, so that genres bleed together, prose can be read as poetry and vice versa. And indeed generalization is a main target in his polemic. Any attempt to address poetry, and not poetries, as a singular and normative genre, with generalized characteristics, tendencies, and effects, is one of the most salient assaults of the mainstream. Dominant culture seeks to remove the materiality from poetry, while language writing attempts to expose it. The very thingness of words is foregrounded, opacity is valorized, and new meanings, new possibilities for language, and open forms are in themselves modes of political action. The opening page of With Strings is "in place of a preface a preface," in which Bernstein argues that "art is made not of essences but of husks. Hazard will never be abolished by a declaration of independence from causality. But such a declaration may change how hazard is inscribed in our everyday lives." Bernstein seems to be pointing to a kind of evasiveness in mainstream culture, a subject position that feels itself comforted more by essences than by husks.

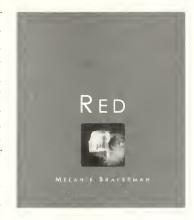
Lest we fall into the common trap of thinking of all subversive art as a study in nay-saying, however, and all language writing an attempt to do simply and thoughtlessly what traditional writing does not, Bernstein makes clear and concerted efforts to distinguish among various subversions:

We can act: we are not trapped in the postmodern condition if we are willing to differentiate between works of art that suggest new ways of conceiving of our present world and those that seek rather to debunk any possibilities for meaning. To do this, one has to be able to distinguish between, on the one hand, a fragmentation that attempts to valorize the concept of a free-floating signifier unbounded to social significance . . . and, on the other, a fragmentation that reflects a conception of meaning as prevented by conventional narration and so uses disjunction as a method of tapping into other possibilities available within language. (Content's Dream)

In the poetry itself, Bernstein calls for action, for speaking out, for articulating and constructing, but he is careful not to be too prescriptive, and is loath to fall into the role of the wrist-slapping rhetorician. The poem "captain cappuccino and his merry con leches" opens with the line, "I'm not telling you what you can't/ do but what you can do." And he seems to be arguing further for the autonomy of the word, language for its own sake, when he says in "thinking i think i think," "The baby/ cries because the baby likes crying" and in "total valor," "The wind is singing but it is not saying anything."

Irony and humor are central to Bernstein's project, and both play a significant role in the poems that comprise With Strings. If we accept Adorno's assertion that one has to have tradition in one to hate it properly, then we can see that advantage of positioning oneself inside the thing one is critiquing. Bernstein often uses the logic and the language of mainstream culture to expose its ironies; but just as often he enacts an entirely new, defiant, and radical mode in order to show us just a few of the infinite number of things that are possible.

ELIZABETH FODASKI is a poet and teacher who lives in New York and Wellfleet. She is the author of fracas (Krupskaya, 1999) and has poems forthcoming in Fence.

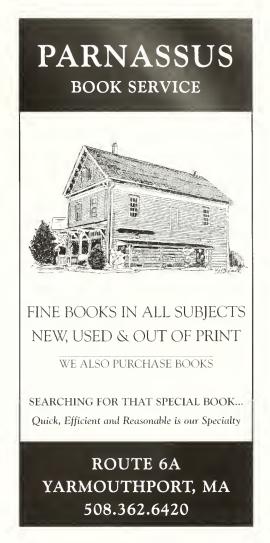


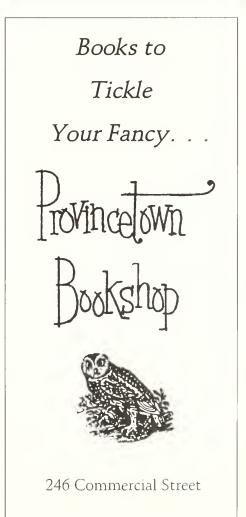
By Melanie Braverman Perugia Press

Melanie Braverman's Red, to be published in September, allows readers to share in a private realm of meditation on the relationships between self and place, self and time, self and other, self and self. Full of honesty, introspection, and the care of a gaze directed out into a world that the gazer finds necessarily meaningful and fragile, Braverman's poetry teaches us that the divine exists in the small everyday acts of drinking coffee, a night on the town, "sectioning a grapefruit," and noticing a "rouge-stained cork left buoyant on its sea of white" ("Compass"). These noticings, with their care of detail, show us the innate meaning that exists in interaction with the world. But the value of these everyday acts cannot be appreciated until we see exactly what Braverman is showing us; the importance of these events is dependent upon the truth that they are never experienced alone. Friends and community are always present in these intense moments of reverie. And because Braverman translated these experiences and thoughts into poetry and set them out into the world, we too, as readers, become part of the web of relationships that constitute the world of *Red*.

This sense of inclusion begins with the "place" from which the poems of *Red* are written; as much as the geography of the Cape is elemental to the work, the interior landscape of the self and its desire to communicate is essential to the language-acts that comprise Red. As an heiress of the confessional tradition, it is almost irrelevant to think of the "speaker" of Braverman's work, for the poet is the speaker of her poems and puts her (real) self on the line. When we read the lines: "I check the answering machine/ for messages because I'm hungry for everything in a way/ I haven't felt in years, I look at myself/ in the mirror in love/ as if my life depends on it" ("What I Want") we understand that we are being offered the voice of honest desire. And in a world where things and people flow in and out of existence so quickly, who has the time for masks, "speakers," and "voices"? It is clear that Melanie Braverman does not, and it is also clear that she uses poetry as a vehicle of communication, to widen the community that she inhabits and cares for.

The overall structure, as well as the scope, of Red enacts this movement outwards from the physicality of the self and its interaction with the





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world to the local community of friends and colleagues, to an even broader scope extending to the national and international community. Braverman begins her collection with the poem "Breach," which articulates the importance of physical space to the poet: "I have been long from the shore . . . I cannot tell whether the tide is coming in/ or going out." Absent from her natural physical habitat, the poet seems to have lost her sense of direction and her feel for the relationships she is supposed to have with the world around her. This "location," or positioning of the self in the world, is quickly regained through the first section of the book beginning with "Compass's" mode of keen visual and sensual perception. Braverman then takes an introspective dive through daily life and desire in "What I Want" and arcs into a mode of self-understanding via relationships with others in "Gay."

The long poem "What I Want" introduces us to the very real people and landscapes that comprise the body of Red. It is all action. We meet Michael "cutting fish," Patty "pouring drinks, flagging in planes," Lulu "visiting from far away," and Lynne "sitting at home this week slicing orbs of colored paper with a knife." Not only do these friends move in and out of the poet's house, she knows exactly what they are doing and where they are even if they are not physically present. This awareness leads us to realize that "what" the poet "wants" is not only her own clarity and happy involvement with the world; Braverman desperately wants her friends and community to be living well, loving well, and having good lives. In this way these poems of desire for the local and the daily expand outwards into a universal and metaphysical desire a desire for relationships in the world at large to be constituted by care and attention to the details that matter despite the tough knocks that the world, at times, can offer.

For along with Braverman's luminous gaze, her sense of the importance of community does not stem from a naïve conception of the world; the speaker of these poems knows the hardships and pain of living and loving in the real world. Red is strewn with the various losses that come with changing relationships, and focus on loss is no surprise. Sincere attachment to relationships inevitably brings pain when they change: "Spend a decade being the nicest/ person you know and then, bang, your lover of twelve/ years leaves you" and you find "the mantle of civility falling/ from your shoulders like some fucked/ up form of grace" ("Red"). But contrary to the way that many people cope with such loss (or, rather, don't cope) Braverman deals and she allows us to see—and learn from-her method of moving on without bitterness to forge new relationships in the world.

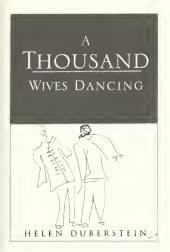
This strength of will coupled with a dedication to carrying on is most touching in the second section of the book which reads as an extended meditation on "music's grief:" the whelming loss that accompanies death ("Entropy"). Death and loss here are personal and physical, leaving absences that forever alter the divine, concrete elements of daily life. The absence of lost ones is not just experienced through the memories of past times; it is an energy everywhere felt: "in the market/ in the bath/ alone at night or/ in the morning/ in bed/ your absence is palpable/ as flesh your absence/ becomes the presence of you" ("Lament").

This absence-turned-presence becomes embodied in the second section's elegies, poems that refuse to let absence dominate. And refusal is a lesson that we can learn from Braverman's work because of its exhibition of defiance in the face of the irreversible. In the very naming of these elegies after the dead ("Two Poems For Susie," "David," and "Paula") Braverman insists on their inclusion in the world even as she insists that we learn to "light candles, make soup, go on" ("David"). It is this combination of a refusal of forgetting and a tenacity in living that shows us a way to continue on in the face of adversity.

After insisting that we can survive the deep loss of death, Red teaches us how to survive. Coming off the cusp of death, the first poem of the third section announces this mode of survival: "Give me everything, I say" ("Winter"). The paths towards survival are those of the renewal of desire and engagement in the world around us through sensuality ("Butch/Femme"), direct communication ("Tell"), and by challenging the social roles that far too often reduce our engagement with life ("Fantasia"). These modes of survival show us that we are most alive when we are wide open, in every way possible, to what the world has to offer.

And this insistence upon an open mode of being in the world is not just an abstract ideological standpoint. In the fourth and final section of Red, Braverman reminds us that recent world events have proven that open engagement with, and recognition of, the world is a necessity that has been too long neglected. "Fall," the penultimate poem of the book, is a direct address to this necessity, for the poem takes us through the poet's experience of September 11th. Braverman approaches this difficult "subject" the only way that she honestly can: by working outwards from the physical, individual experience of the event to the effect of it on her community and outwards to the world at large. In addressing the event through the personal and local Braverman opens up her meditation of her experience to her readers; for although our experiences all vary, we all remember where we were and what we were doing in its moment. By writing about and sharing her own experience, Braverman encourages us to share our experiences as well, and we cannot help but to hope that this process of sharing also become a process of healing. And with this hope for healing Red concludes. Honest to the last, Braverman leaves us with the hard, yet hopeful sentiment that "If living with uncertainty is the thing that we/ must do, then let that existence be/light" ("Benediction").

KARLA KELSEY is a poet who teaches at Duke University.



A Thousand Wives Dancing

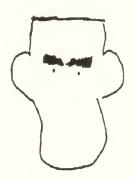
By Helen Duberstein Xlibris Press

Helen Duberstein is an avant-garde writer whose dramatic career burgeoned in the '60s and '70s in off-Broadway theaters. A poet, playwright, novelist, and short story writer, her rhythms and imagery, emotionally complex, utilize the resources of these separate forms. The physicality of her keyboard is protean in its subtleties and her themes drive a resonating superstructure. Joyce and Beckett are models for her vision of the sensate sordidness and cruelty of life. Her passionate absorption in myths, especially those handed down from the Old Testament in both Judaism and Christianity, reintroduce the romanticism of mystery into the contemporary world she creates. Patriarchal myths define woman as either Eve or Lilith, thereby splitting the nature of the female. Neither is the equal of the male. According Duberstein, Lilith is the more maligned, but Eve does not do well either.

Why do men hate women so much? Why do they fear them so much? In answering these questions, A Thousand Wives Dancing explodes with female rage. One episode after another shows the predictable reactions of machismo on the part of supposedly enlightened males. Apprised of male sexual aggression, even rape, the received answer is that the woman must have provoked it. The intellectual superiority claimed by males is traditional, embedded in the power structures of most societies. Starting with the absurd myth of the female created out of the rib of a man, continuing with the irresponsibility of Eve taking a bite out of the forbidden apple and seducing Adam into eating too, woman has been depicted as necessary but dangerous to man. Eve's transgression resulted in the progenitors of the human race being expelled from earthly paradise.

Provincetown, the main setting for this novel about New Yorkers who summer by the sea, has some elements of Eden. Here at the edge of the earth, the ocean laps against sand dunes. The time is April to September 1981. A community of friends, mostly couples with children, has been summering here for years,

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intimate enough to function like an extended family. The children, now young adults, are in the process of separating from their parents. The parents, in mid-life, are Janus-faced. Looking backward they assess past careers and family relations; looking forward they weigh plans for the future. The Women's Liberation Movement of the late '70s drastically changed the consciousness of women. The wives, with fewer household and family constraints, are free to dance in the shifting sands of what woman's liberation demands. Women's customary servile behavior to men has become anathema. Late in the novel, two exasperated husbands, sophisticated bohemians, drinks in hand, propose a desperate toast: "Down with Women's Lib!"

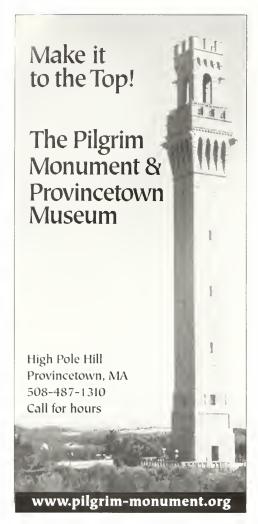
The novel, like a play, has a prefatory page listing the cast of characters, grouped in families. Duberstein's method proceeds more by scenes than by consistent narrative. Events are less important than the emotional reactions they disclose. The author entwines voices from poems and scenes from fiction, turning these elements into dramatized theatrical pieces.

Five characters gather to celebrate a Seder, the Jewish ceremonial dinner held on the first night of Passover that includes the reading of the Haggadah and the eating of specified foods symbolic of the Israelites' bondage in Egypt and of the Exodus that freed them. Bill Horan is a Joyce scholar of note. His father Max Horowitz is present with Bill's live-in girlfriend Daisy Ann (whose ex-husband turns up late in the book). Naomi and Martin are both painters. In the living room in front of the TV are chairs for the men to watch a baseball game. Daisy Ann, who has never prepared a Seder, has Bill helping in the kitchen. Bill wants Naomi to replace him, but she has planted herself in an armchair apart from the men, reading a notice of a friend's new play in the New York Times.

Max, Bill's father, occupies himself by getting out of the Seder chest the silver and the special dishes for the ritual feast, muttering about tradition and about his wife who would never have accepted his help. The scene becomes hilarious when Bill decides to replace the Passover reading in the Haggadah with Bloom's memory of it in the Aeolus chapter of Ulysses: "And then the lamb and the cat and the dog and the stick and the water and then the angel of Death kills the butcher and he kills the ox and the dog kills the cat. Sounds a bit silly till you look into it well. Justice it means but it's about everybody eating everybody else."

The meal over, Naomi asks to read a "Freedom Seder," which she says stands for freedom of all people, Egyptian as well as Hebrew, women as well as men. "The women defied Pharaoh's command to kill all newborn Hebrew males. Thus Moses could live . . . When Moses had grown among his own people, Pharaoh's daughter took him as her son. Thus was Moses' life shaped by women who joined in rebellion against death and oppression." The men listen, then politely

Sequences include a summer literary conference with an all-male panel, including Bill





Horan, based on the James Joyce conference held that June in Provincetown. There are two gallery openings, a concert at the Art Association, and a very original public entertainment put on at a movie theater. Interspersed are scenes from New York, including Alice's play, The Axe of Creation, set in a brothel, where each character is a whore and all art becomes an act of survival. There is also a guided tour organized by Women Against Pornography, part of which involves examining the choices available to men in a "glitzy sex palace" on 42ND

Alice is generally the spokeswoman, less intimidated by her husband, more successful in her work as playwright and photographer. Naomi, an adjunct at a college where her husband is a professor, is sliding into a pattern of self-destructive behavior. Francesca, against her parent's advice, has begun singing in bars and composing songs.

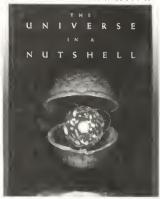
In Provincetown they occupy an old house at a fictional address on "Bond Street," where the group has gathered for almost 20 summers, their children growing up in front of their eyes. The bar at Napi's with religious figures illuminated in stained glass is described as an altarpiece for a shadowy Black Mass of social drinking. "The cash register, to the left under the Virgin Mary, was beneath the Cross." Naomi says she is afraid of disappearing: "Faculty wives disappear." One character narrowly escapes being raped; she is asked what she did to provoke the attack.

Abe Adams appears near the end of the book, courting Alice with talk of Solomon's wives and celestial marriage. Seven hundred women, all virgins, said yes to Solomon of their own free will. Three hundred additional women were taken as concubine slaves. "One thousand wives dancing," Alice says. As for celestial marriage, which few men since Solomon seem capable of, she reminds Abe she has one husband, and offers to meet him only once every three years, a preposterous idea for him.

A Thousand Wives Dancing deals primarily with women, who gain strength through their relationships with each other, not with their male partners. Recognizing and expressing their anger over various kinds of divisive male/female put-downs and humiliations, they dismount from the seesaw of power within the family, shed scar tissue from the past, and emerge into a future they have worked to change. Says Alice, "I love living on Mt. Olympus. I love living on the heights. It suits me just fine."

ELIZABETH POLLET is author of A Family Romance (New Directions). She is the editor of Portrait of Delmore: Journals and Notes of Delmore Schwartz (Farrar, Straus, Giroux).

STEPHEN HAWKING



The Universe in a Nutshell

By Stephen Hawking Bantam Books

This book, describing the latest ideas in cosmology, including aspects of astrophysics, relativity theory, quantum mechanics, and various esoteric extensions, is really written for scientists in general and physicists in particular. However, parts are so clearly written that the non-scientist can derive some understanding of the subject matter.

Many parts deny an understanding to the lay person and these parts have some value in that they present a language and vernacular that might be useful in a self-delusionary way. Hawking's style is mostly clear and humor is frequently encountered. The illustrations are charming and clever, although towards the end of the book they may be too clever in that they might deceivingly give the reader the feeling of understanding when there is in fact none. I shall describe simply the contents of each chapter with its strengths and weaknesses.

Chapter 1: A Brief History of Relativity

This clearly written chapter explains special and general relativity. However it is not for the lay person. One does not have to be trained in the field but knowledge of physics is more than useful. This knowledge could have been picked up in school (a B.S. degree or higher) or assiduous reading, over a long period of time, of the Science section of the New York Times on Tuesdays. The illustrations are often delightful, but require some study to obtain an understanding of their purported lesson.

Chapter 2: The Shape of Time

It is marvelous at first but then it takes a giant leap and starts to discuss particles, strings, membranes, imaginary time, super symmetries, etc. This will leave most readers behind, groping, unless they have physics background. He simply introduces the terms and doesn't attempt to give them physical meaning or any semblance of understandability. He becomes too glib when he starts to discuss supersymmetry, making assertions, with no plausibility arguments, about things (e.g., equal number of bosons and fermions, etc.) His explanation

of string theory is simply inadequate. His discussion of branes and higher dimensions is not very satisfying. At the end he brings in thermodynamics, connecting entropy to black holes and information.

Chapter 3: The Universe in a Nutshell

He starts out by describing the universe and the distribution of galaxies and cosmological developments. He does this fairly clearly and should be understandable to the lay person. He introduces an abstruse concept of imaginary time which can be somewhat grasped if you interpret it as another dimension. For the lay person, this is a difficult pill to swallow.

The arguments about the beginnings of the universe become abstruse and more mathematical than physical. Readers will be left behind, but don't worry, and don't give up.

He goes off the deep end when he tries to relate probability statistics to the big bang and the beginning of the universe—it is not a credible scenario.

He again starts to discuss imaginary time but he simply makes assertions that are hard to accept except in a purely mathematical form.

He is not always clear on his tutorials. His description of the anthropic principle leaves a lot to be desired. His discussion of alternate universes may have more religious significance than anything else.

His model of the universe, with its many possible configurations is asserted but not explained. He has tried to reduce it to simple geometric postulates but he doesn't succeed in presenting a clear picture or in proposing easy-to-understand models and explanations. This chapter ends in increasing obfuscation just as the universe experiences increasing entropy.

Chapter 4: Predicting the Future

His discussion of determinency is understandable and his discussion of black holes is reasonably understandable by lay people if they accept various premises. In fact they are rather explanatory and serve as a basis for half-understanding.

His discussions of black holes, event horizon, and surfaces of constant time are too abstruse for a non-expert and they don't really supply a tutorial understanding to the reader.

His final discussion of p-branes, black holes, and information is not at all physical and is not explained at all but merely asserted.

Chapter 5: Protecting the Past

At the beginning there was a discussion of time travel and its possibility due to space-time warp. He presents geometric arguments for his contentions but these are not easily grasped.

The whole discussion of time travel is incomprehensible to the lay person, as well as most sci-

In any case he says time travel, on either a microscopic or macroscopic scale, has such a small probability as to be virtually impossible.

Chapter 6: Our Future?-Star Trek or Not?

He discusses, philosophically, the future of people, intellect, computers and space travel, all leading to the meeting up with other intelligent life forms. He is very skeptical of that possibility.

Chapter 7: Brave New World

His discussion of branes, missing matter, and dark matter will be incomprehensible to most scientists. There are probably some who understand but they will be few. His diagrams and illustrations, though artful, do nothing to increase the reader's understanding of the con-

Even if much is not clear and much is not understandable the book is worth reading for several reasons:

- 1) It gives the reader a feeling he understands complex concepts, or what it is like to be selfdelusionary.
- 2) It gives the reader a familiarity of terms, expressions, and concepts at the leading edge of cosmology.
- 3) The author's prose style is smooth, often delightful even if not understandable.
 - 4) The artwork is entertaining and clever.

S. P. KELLER is a research physicist. Now retired from IBM, he serves on the magazine's advisory board.

FRED G. LEEBRON

IN THE MIDDLE OF ALL THIS

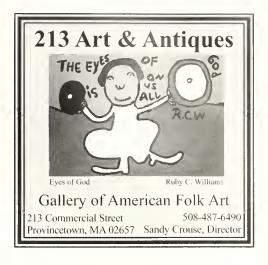
In the Middle of All This

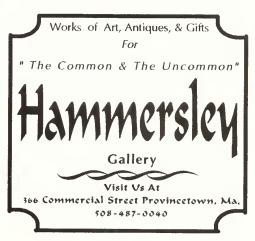
By Fred Leebron

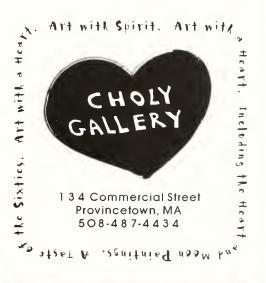
Harcourt, Inc.

Fred Leebron writes about the emotional tenor of modern life with a realism that doesn't flinch in the face of emptiness, nor stint the great tenderness his characters feel for each other. Out West and Six Figures, his first two novels, show characters making their way through their often barren lives, at the mercy of circumstance, with no conventional redemption in sight. In the Middle of All This goes further into the same territory, considering a modern death as it ripples through the lives of a family.

Elizabeth Kreutzel is a young, wealthy, professional woman, well-married and hoping for children, just beginning her life when she finds she is













dying. Leaving his own wife to take over his responsibilities at work and at home, her brother Martin flies to London to be with her, and finds himself in bewildering territory. He wants to save her . . . or at least to comfort her, but he strides into his sister's life only to realize he doesn't really know what her life has been. She is withdrawn into her death, and into the transcendental cult her husband belongs to, and she seems almost a stranger.

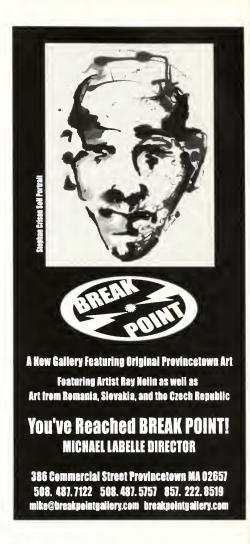
Martin wants, intends, to do the right thing, but what can that be? He tries to comfort but seems to intrude. Tries to let his sister go her own way, but worries this is only neglect. Tries to help her negotiate the bewildering warren of medical possibilities, but wonders if he is only overbearing, determined on keeping her alive only because he selfishly can't bear to lose her. His own failings trip him up comically at every turn. In his fear that his brother in law has abandoned his sister, he nearly abandons his own family....when he goes out to escape the troubles for a minute he gets drunk and into such a predicament that it seems his sister will have to rescue him. And then, Elizabeth and her husband disappear.

Like EM Forster in *A Passage to India*, Leebron takes the reader on a journey into a void that can't be fully understood. Death advances with neither the comfort of religion nor any hope from modern medicine. Life teems with confusion and ambiguity. Martin's father is suffering from cancer too, his wife is suffering from exhaustion as she takes over all of his responsibilities. Everyone he knows is facing some kind of terrible loss.

Leebron's triumph is that each of his central characters emerges as heroic, on the smallest and most difficult scale. Elizabeth works, heartbreakingly, to save her family from the pain of her death. Martin is determined to do right, but he is too exquisitely conscious to believe he knows what "right" is. His efforts to understand and help begin to constitute a spiritual quest; a search for the true resources necessary to face life and death in the post-religious world. His earnest—attempts and drunken errors finally seem to show a man grappling courageously with reality, a wonderfully endearing character.

And, back at home, teaching Martin's classes as well as her own, caring for the kids, and facing a string of disasters ranging from a broken garage door to a student's suicide, his wife Lauren becomes the quiet pulse of the book. The mundane details of her days are woven poetically through the book-calls to the plumber, getting the kids through their days, keeping the students and the colleagues and the relatives calmed and comforted, fighting back mildew and mice and leaks and suspicions and worries-doing her patient best and resolving every night to do better the next day. Lauren is even willing to bear her sister-in-law's child, without so much as a qualm apparently . . . though the inseminations never take, and this enormous, unconsidered act loses resonance as the characters seem to forget all about it.

Leebron has perfect pitch for fatherly love.



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Martin's deep, bewildered tenderness toward his family, and his and Lauren's daily, utterly unglamourous, efforts at goodness, stand finally as powerful redemptive forces. What can one life mean, in a world teeming with pointless deaths? This is the unspoken question these characters struggle with throughout. As Martin carries his frightened son Max away from a fireworks display, Max asks suddenly, head still buried in his father's shoulder: "Is it beautiful?"

"Maybe you should look and see," Martin answers.

Leebron's characters never stop looking; that is their surpassing, consoling strength.

HEIDI JON SCHMIDT is the author of three collections of stories, most recently Darling (Picador).



Luca: Discourse on Life and Death

By Rochelle Owens

Junction Press

Composed over a span of 10 years, Luca: Discourse on Life and Death insists on the importance of the smallest fiber to the entire fabric of reality.

Mona Lisa, model and muse, and Leonardo, artist, act out the masterpiece; together they draw a Cabbalistic tree of life and death, of voracious evolution, alive with spontaneous mutation. At the time of Da Vinci's calmly secretive composition of Mona Lisa, he was making turbulent drawings of deluge, ferocious storms, and spiraling black clouds engorged with domestic objects. Perhaps the artist gave release to the dark energies surrounding the meditative exercise of painting.

A shroud, bearing the traces of a crucified woman, at times serves as a "white throw," covering the narrator. It is also a manifestation of the "primal text" whose role is played by the original painting. It is implied that the body the white throw covers is the real text: "the raw data ... the key to the code covered with / a white throw," recalling French critic Julie Kristeva's famous assertion that the woman writer's task is to write her body. Indeed, here all of creation serves as a primal text, an explosive outpouring from a centrifugal force.

A powerful voice bears witness to a variety of narratives. The narrator's persona may be, sepa-



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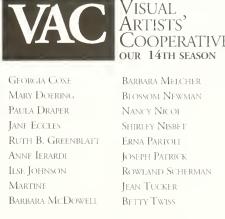
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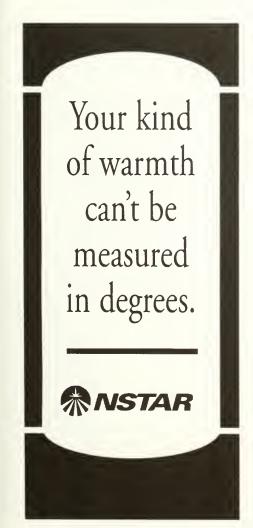
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rately or simultaneously, the writer; Mona sa del Giancondo; her friend Flora; Flora's mall unctuous child who later seems to grow into Leonardo's beloved assistant Salai; Leonardo himself; Sigmund Freud; a dead woman lying in the street; and a crucified Osage Indian woman. Despite the lack of a single central voice, the reader is never free of the presence of an active subject. Obviously, the text hearkens back to mystical texts such as the Book of Revelation. However, here the awestruck reverence of the mystic is replaced by unflinching directness:

I must make verses into the fibers of the shroud white lead out of my hand fluid

one substance in three persons that the cycle of rhythmic compulsion

I could not put the brush out of my hand ("A Lira Here A Lira There")

Owens is regarded largely as a feminist poet. Her male and female personas tend to be bigger than life, yet more grounded in the banality of contemporary life than one would expect in myth or legend.

In *Luca*, the energies that emerge from Leonardo's *ateher* are not from a strictly binary opposition between Lenny and Mona; this

is not a personal process exploited at a cosmic effort, but a group dynamic binding all of the personas, who create and destroy at blinding speed.

Leonardo contributed to the development chiaroscuro, using a very thin first layer of oil paint, allowing light to strike the canvas directly and bounce back to the eye through successive layers of paint. Light appears to be emitted from the glow in the face of the subject. The heavier top layers of paint create shadows and contrast with that almost invisible first layer:

the painful perfection merely passed through chiaroscuro from the deep wounds degenerative bitter dug-up squirts of red or black unforeseen

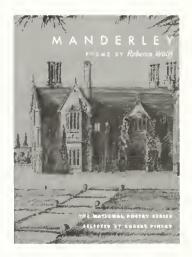
The smile of the Mona Lisa exposes a gap between levels of reality: "slow molecular smile the sun should not / have blazed not the trees greened."

Owens never lets us forget that symbols are real; they transmit information. Like del Giancordo herself, the Osage woman is a crossroads, a network streaming with data.

Crucifixion is an effective symbol because of its gory immediacy. By bringing the crucified Native American woman into the presence of the Italians, Owens is making her redemption possible, giving her story a chance to emerge from the buried mound of historic

lies that obscured it. Hers is the voice associated with the earth, the natural forces destroyed along with lost narratives. This voice may be seen to signal a "renaissance" of the postmodern subject, the "I," that was buried under the rubble of the twentieth century.

CYNTHIA DAVIDSON is a poet and the editor of an online literary journal, Rio (www.rioarts.com). She teaches writing at SUNY-Stony Brook.



Manderley

By Rebecca Wolff Fencebooks

Miss America

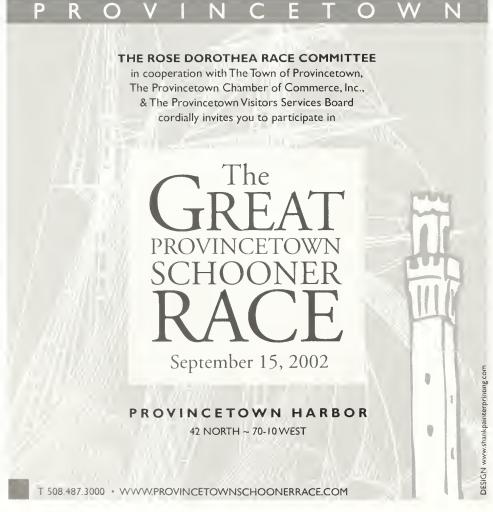
By Catherine Wagner Fencebooks

Zirconia

By Chelsey Minnis Fencebooks

REBECCA WOLFF's *Manderley*, selected by Robert Pinsky for the National Poetry Series, is a great opportunity to experience the strength and breadth of today's poetry. Like Pinsky, Wolff is a selfless champion for poetry. She is a founder and editor of *Fence*, which has become, in a few short years, an essential poetry journal. Her affiliated press, Fencebooks, is responsible for the auspicious launch of Chelsey Minnis and Catherine Wagner's first books. In the spirit of Wolff's mission, I introduce, along with her own work, the poetry she has helped introduce.

Wolff is not writing just to make poetry; she is making poetry write as much as it can. The gateway that leads into this book is the pointed arch of the gothic—in title, cover, epigraph, and opening poems. The gothic is not her agenda but a base-melody to riff from. By the third poem we learn ("Tunnel Visionary"): "my theorem runs: / if history is a tunnel, / timed ribs supporting a structure, / then it is collapsible." The reader, then, should expect "[u]npinioned forms of simultaneity"; past and present, high art and low culture, are to



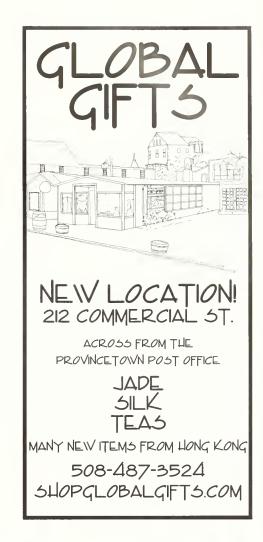
be equally investigated. If we encounter the "spooky rhododendrons" of the gothic, we also have some honest interest in Our Bodies, Ourselves, some nonchalant acceptance both of blah, blah, blah and the mutability of meaning in language. Theory is never an end for her and, refreshingly, it's no big deal. We have lives to live and art to make. The speakers in this book don't need footnotes to explain the complexity of self; for that, they have the tracks of their own feet.

Throughout Manderley we encounter many possible theorems and theses grounded in the art of poetry. Lines like "Imagination has never been a friend to me" or "Real content is mystery" or "I liked it so much he gave it to me as a present." Even where these statements disagree, the poet is not contradicting herself. Manderley is a constant figuring-out that will overlook no possibility; Wolff has not made the common mistake of mistranslating the famous edict make it new as throw it all out. Her formidable intellect and reading are mustered to explore "[t]he basic / subject that of experience in question." ("Broads Abroad: Elizabeth Bishop & Jane Bowles").

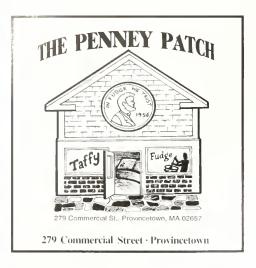
Good questions make good poems. "Spending the Day on a Sleeping Porch" is a gentle minor masterpiece. At once a lyric familyremembering and a private metaphysics, this four-stanza poem manages to hold the sentimental and apocalyptic of the family tree together in a way the rest of us can accomplish only by actually going home for Thanksgiving. But this piece does not simply demonstrate, it thinks, aware and careful with its own awareness. The sleeping porch "provides an elegant barrier, / tightly woven of vision: from inside, I can see, / but cannot be seen by, / the involuntary squadron / of my genealogy." In this repose, after alienated mom, after suicidal uncle, aunt's barbecue, and "the breeze much commented on," Wolff finishes the visit with a devastating sigh: "Here I have observed that / you must indeed follow children around, / endlessly, or they will kill themselves / at every opportunity."

The issue of irony in this book is important and subtle. How earnest can we take to be a speaker who announces: "It is all so base, no matter how we / elevate it to the level of this object / this subject"? The answer, I think, is actually easier than the question, if only because it is left up to the reader. Irony, for Wolff, is like every other fact of the world we live and write in: something we should neither ignore nor hammer into gimmicky. Get over it, get on with it may be the productive message. She knows an object may be only a metaphor used to come between people: "It is a red wax candle / between us on the table. Lurid, / in decay. Do you want to make something / of it?"

Moody undergraduate brooding on postmodern existentialism will not be tolerated unless it actually does something for us. If what rises from the tumble-down of deconstruction will be more meaningful, require more faith, precisely because we can no longer lean on the deceptions of the past, then Manderley is a hopeful sign that a truly productive synthesis is emerging. As Wolff writes in the book's final







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poem, "A godhead / is lacking from our blueprint." The careful reader will realize, however, that resignation is far from Wolff's mind. She is simply realistic about the daily hard work left to be done by those who care about

In "Everything Demystified," Wolff realizes the responsibilities that accompany "a critique of naïve and degraded notions of referentiality." It's easy fun to pick apart our aesthetic inheritance, but anyone who stops there is poetic dead weight:

Farewell O land of the festooned armadillo, the albatross contumely, the torments of July. One way of life is ended; it's a big change to explain and it's hard not to be boring.

Wolff follows this stanza of farewell and warning with the poem "The Sun in Winter," a lovely etude of her (and its) own approach. The poem ends:

Oh, stay the sun and make some meager homily fixed on ginger-red wood siding to reflect into the eye a burnished spasm of glad tiding: antidote to venom of our imagery's declining.

Whether the issue at hand is art or pure perception, the solution appears to lie within the problem itself—a troubling, hopeful dilemma. This desire for beauty to "stay" and, in doing so, to give us a way to see it again, is what Manderley accomplishes.



CATHERINE WAGNER's work shares some of Wolff's concerns, attacking from a more primordial angle. Emerson, calling for a true American poet, said that language is a fossil record of poetry: every word was once a poem. If poetry is some kind of life-animal, then Catherine Wagner's Miss America is a glorious female beast.

Her first book is cocksure and wailing, stinky, rude, and actually happening. Miss America is not self-thrilled by its (her?) own intentions and inventions, but running fast ahead of them. We have here the strangely visceral truths that fall from children or common mistranslations by adults, something undeniable slipped from the angry, drunk, or otherwise possessed.

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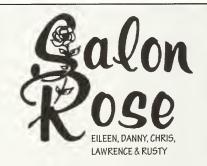


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Wagner warns us of herself (and her propensity to invent words) right from the start. The opening poem of the book begins: "nigh said I made that up to / get some sweeteye from you all / some glance at me even if my / story is boring and a lie / ... and who fuckin cares they don't / want me to be likem and borem / everybody dead. / Since I been here SCARED / and my natural EBULLISHNESS / held back by a warning finger. / Mo lady! Poop it out!"

Anyone who thinks this is babytalk should remember how we react when encountering a talking baby: fascinated and mesmerized. The further these nascent communications seem to be from "language," the closer they feel to an emotional core. Wagner's tongues, however, are never an escape from meaning. As she tell us in "Poem for Poets & Writers," "I like understanding so much I want it to happen over and over." Like Wolff, Wagner is not just playing with the readymade materials of poetry, she is working from inner fiat: "Not here with joy but under pressure / from my superego" ("A Poem for Art in America," one of her "Magazine Poems").

On the contrary, this book does include joy (much of it, um, very natural). "I Am Darling You" begins "let me king around / you king all over, mighty" and continues, building gut-felt affection with mere words: "slavish all over me, please. // Darned mighty, sleeping, / oyster eyes. // Feel little. Little my head to sleep. // I suffer you, you basic." The final line of this poem, if read alone, would remain the merely prosaic: "He made enough for me to take to lunch." But the pressurized accumulations of off-phrased adoration force something miraculous into this final sentence. By the time the reader reaches the last line, each of its words tremor with the bursting love that speaks it. We suddenly experience the no-difference between correct and incorrect when human feeling overwhelms language.

Wagner's yawps run from the clever/cultural ("If you are Gwyneth / You are never toenails on my rug / Abounding") to the crisis/existential. But, as we see in "Café Rouge," even the cerebrum's old complaints about its fetid meat-vehicle are freshly horrifying to Wagner's mind:

Shoulderblades frayed the cloth I'm made of Sewn up my neck round speaking hole and ragged with snot pale salmon concealer sodden I pick and pick the seam all day does I really think anything covers me up this my swan is it

In contrast to Wolff, Wagner dives more into the skin than the conscious mind to find her way. These poems are raw, pre-lapsarian in their instinctual connections (not to mention their naked and naughty refusal of sin).



CHELSEY MINNIS's Zirconia mines the material, not the unconscious meaning of the language we share. She consumes a caramel on a leather sectional couch: "I run my hand along the leather unknowingly / as I oralize the caramel and soften it as I am on the . . . modular couch with padded armrests / where I can rest my arms / as I revisit sorrowful / and frightening moments / of happiness that must have occurred."

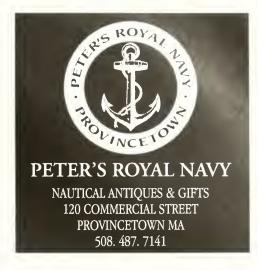
These poems, so sly in their use of our daily materials, may cause some readers to miss their nuances. One recent reviewer claims that Minnis's "Cherry" displays an "overwrought sentimentality." Someone please send me that Hallmark card

Minnis's work is post-advertising. She can make the entire aura of a thing wash over you with thoughts of yourself, "the sensual moment keeps splashing and unbuckling upon you like a replay" ("Pitcher"). The result (or the cause) is a kind of emotional synaesthesia with the physical. It's often hard to tell which came first, the emotion or the product. Our demons become things: "so that you may / not fear / such a property within yourself or / others" ("Tiger"). Or they come from the opposite direction as "airborn internal knowledge" ("Uncut").

Human instinct makes us make ourselves metaphor. As Minnis writes in "Sternum," "at least simulated vulnerability is bearable / for those / who cannot / withstand unreasonable tenderness.

Minnis employs lengthy ellipses marked by extended series of periods; her poems take some getting used to, but it's worth it. Her devices prevent the eye from cheating the white space between stanzas its due of silence; the reader's experience of pause and meditation is linked directly to the poet's. A preliminary taste of Minnis's work appeared in Provincetown Arts 2000 ("Fur"). Don't stop there. Read all three of these books. Read Pinsky. Follow their diverse leads into contemporary poetry.

ROBERT STRONG is a poet who assists the Fine Arts Work Center with its summer program.









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One's Place On Earth:

My Cousin Christa

BY JAN WORTHINGTON

W

e drove to Ojai from Los Angeles along the Pacific Coast Highway. It was one of those California winter days that lingers in memory; no smog, no Santa Anna winds, only a blue sky disappearing into the crystalline Pacific.

My cousin, Christa, was visiting from New York City, where she lived and worked as a fashion journalist. I was living in Los Angeles, writing television movies. Christa had some interviews to do in LA and she wanted to take a few days vacation as well.

After leaving the Coast Highway, the road to Ojai moves north through miles of spinning wind-mills and dusty terrain, then takes an uphill path to the High Desert. The road meanders slowly switch-backing across hillsides of avocado and orange groves.

I was taking Christa to Ojai because something about the place reminded me of home—Truro. The blue gray mountains met the horizon, looking like Cape Cod Bay on a still summer day. The town itself was a small artist community. I knew Christa would like it there. We had both lived "away" from our New England roots, she in Europe where she wrote about style, and I, in New York City and then Los Angeles, working in the film and television business.

Every summer of our lives in Truro we spent on Depot Road next to the Pamet River, surrounded by aunts and uncles and a string of cousins on either side of our family. It was and would always be home for us and we often talked about what it would be like to live in Truro year-round.

Our trip to Ojai was a pilgrimage of sorts. We were going to meet an artist named Beatrice Wood who was in her nineties at the time. She was a legend in the film community in Los Angeles where people were always looking for an "original or authentic" person.

Beatrice Wood lived on a ranch with her young cowboy "assistant" in the foothills of the Los Padres Mountains. She was a painter and a ceramicist, famous for her unique glazes and colorful clay figures.

When she was a young woman living in New York City she became romantically involved with the artist, Marcel Duchamp, and with the French author Henri-Pierre Roche. The trio became inseparable and it was widely rumored that their three-way love affair formed the basis for Roche's tragic novel *Jules and Jim*, which was then made into a film by Francois Truffaut.

Beatrice received us wearing an aqua and gold Indian sari with her long, white hair pulled up into a loose bun. Her open sandals revealed pink painted toes. Both of her arms were covered with silver bracelets that jangled as she moved or made a point with her hands. She gave us a tour of her studio while telling us about writing her autobiography, "I Shock Myself", that had just been published. She regaled us with stories of her youth, her love of the desert and her on-going fascination with men! She was opinionated, charming, impish and loving.

Christa turned to me ten minutes into our visit and said, "Doesn't she remind you of Titi?" Of course, she did. She had the same artists sensibility mixed with a bawdy sense of humor, enormous curiosity and a huge loving heart that our beloved grandmother, Tiny Worthington, possessed.

We had Indian tea served by the young hunky Cowboy in tight jeans and snakeskin boots. It was obvious to us that our grandmother would have called the young man "a rounder." And, that he adored Beatrice, who beamed at him from her satin couch.

After we each purchased a copy of her book, we reluctantly said good-bye and made our way back down the winding road to Santa Monica. We talked about Beatrice's young man, and agreed if you



had to get old that was surely the way to go. I can hear Christa's laugh as we joked about being sexy, old women!

What I remember most about that trip, aside from the magical afternoon we spent with Beatrice, was that we talked a lot about our work as writers. We shared the frustration and anxiety of making a living at writing, but not writing for ourselves.

Christa had been a bureau Chief in Paris for Women's Wear Daily; a high-powered very visible job for a young woman from New York. She managed to move through the prickly fashion world and write some wonderful pieces about the European fashion scene and it inhabitants.

When she left WWW, she struck out on her own as a freelance journalist covering both the world of style in Europe and in the United States. She sat in the front rows of the Couture shows, interviewed famous designers, attended extravagant parties and reported on the lives of the European jet set.

It was a glamorous and fast moving world and Christa glided through it, but to her cousins and close friends the fact that Christa wrote about High Fashion and style, was both funny and ironic. The truth was she personally cared little for clothing and rarely wore make-up. She had adapted her mother's simple style and often wore black, her lovely, thick hair pulled into a chignon or hanging loosely around her shoulders.

She once recommended a hairdresser to me when I was working in London and needed something done to my hair. Somehow this young man convinced me to cut my hair very short, and I walked away with by far the best haircut of my life. She had a great eye and appreciation for beauty, but she did not spend money on herself easily or often. I was with her once when, after much debate and consideration she bought a silver and gold-banded ring. It was simple piece of jewelry, elegant and understated.

Christa could capture a person, time or place with a few words of grace and insight as she did in a 1990, interview with Winona Ryder for Elle Magazine, in which she wrote . . . "Across the ritzy expanse of a Beverly Hills hotel, she appears like a creature visiting for a time form a purer planet-all black and white amid Kodacolor, an alabaster child-woman in a sea change of sun-damage. Lightboned to the point of lift-off, she is anchored by a wholesome, high schooler's voice...

Later she wrote a column on antiques and collecting for the New York Times. In one piece about antique sextants and octants, she wrote . . . "Nowadays, fixing longitude and latitude at sea can be done with the click of a button through satellite navigation. But that removes the human factor in pinpointing one's place on earth-something always pre-

sent when mariners used instruments of celestial navigation like the 19th-century sextants in brass and the 18th-century octants in ebony and ivory."

Christa was a gifted writer, but writing did not come easily to her. She struggled and agonized over every assignment. When she was "on deadline" she would sit for hours, smoking occasionally, eating rarely, sleeping less, until the piece was done. When we both lived in New York City, I would call her and try to entice her out with an invitation to meet me at the corner sushi bar on Fifth Avenue, she rarely did, opting instead to stay with her piece until it was finished. Once she turned in her assignment, she would still carry nagging doubts about the work, waiting nervously to hear from the editor and even then not sure she'd done the best work she could do.

When she was murdered last January, she was forty-six years old. Her daughter Ava was two and a half. She had moved to Truro four years ago after returning to her childhood home in Hingham, to take car of her mother who was seriously ill.

After her mother's death and nine months pregnant with her daughter, she left New York and returned to a place her heart told her was home-Depot Road, in Truro.

Everything she wrote was good, and she rarely missed an assignment, but she still was yearning to tackle other kinds of writing. She had long past lost interest in style and fashion. She wanted to write for herself, but her life changed dramatically and happily when she had a child and her time for writing was limited.

Recently, she had started to find more time to write. She had taken a play-writing course with playwright, Sinan Unel who said, "She was extremely articulate, eloquent and smart and made a great contributor to the class. She was very perceptive when critiquing others work." In Sinan's class she had started working on a play about the death of her mother and the birth of her daughter. She had just bought a new laptop.

From her kitchen window, Christa had a

spectacular view of a salt marsh, the Pamet River and beyond to the Cape Cod Bay. She lived within steps of her grandparents' house on land that she knew so well she could find her way home

Like many writers, Christa kept a journal. The Police took her journals. They poured over them, searching for the slightest detail that could lead them to her murderer. The irony of this, of course is horrifying. To have strangers reading her most private thoughts, joys, and fears is the most awful of violations, but not worse than the crime itself.

The work that Christa left us speaks for itself. The accomplishment and the craft are readily apparent, but so is a talented writer waiting in the wings, to tell her own stories, to write her own truths to give her voice to a more intimate form of writing that was hers alone. The loss is felt in what she wasn't able to leave us, the words unwritten, the acute observations untold, the insights not explored. She didn't have time.

Sometimes, late at night, when the horror envelopes me, I step outside and look heavenward into the shimmering darkness and look for Christa. I see her, in her house perched on the hillside, laptop humming, her fingers flying across the keyboard, words flowing, in that place all writers wish to be; free to express herself, free of self-doubt and criticism, free to do her best work. Free to write.

> –Jan Worthington April 17, 2002

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Our Tony

BY MARGARET CARROLL-BERGMAN

ony Jackett was out on the clam flats this January, when a writer telephoned and asked him for an interview. It had been 20 days since his former lover was murdered. He later wrote in an e-mail: I was getting out of my kayak after taking water samples and the cell phone rings. Thinking it was Jerry Moles from the Division of Marine Fisheries, I was surprised to hear it was a local author. "How did you get my cell phone number?" I asked. "The Town Hall," she said. She wasn't calling to ask which shellfish beds were open.

At 52 years old, Tony Jackett still lives in the town where he was born. He spent 25 years as a commercial fisherman, the captain of his own boat, and the last four as the town's shellfish constable. He is a simple man, married to the same woman for thirty years, father of six children, known for their dramatic and athletic abilities and beautiful singing voices. However, one sexual indiscretion resulted in Tony's being dragged into a dangerous crossrip, swimming against the current in the open water of the media. Soon he would be the top story of every television magazine show and big city newspaper. A man who took pride in defining himself was now being defined by others.

Peter Manso was nearing completion of his cultural history, *Ptown: Art, Sex, and Money on the Outer Cape*, when heiress and single mother Christa Worthington was beaten and stabbed to death in her Truro beach cottage this winter. Worthington's two-and-a-half-year-old daughter Ava, unharmed, spent two days guarding and trying to revive her mother's lifeless body until a neighbor stumbled upon the haunting scene.

Manso was already profiling Tony Jackett among three other local personalities in his book, when news hit that Jackett had fathered Ava in an extra-marital affair three years ago. With the murder, the investigation, and the custody battle between Jackett and the court-appointed guardian, Manso struck a vein of literary gold. Manso was quoted in the *New York Observer* as saying he was mulling over a second Provincetown volume, one that would focus on the murder case. In anticipating the last chapter of his book, due this July, Manso said, "I know how it will read if they don't catch the murderer. But that's me talking like a selfish writer. I hope the hell they catch this maniac."

Six months later the murder remains unsolved. Although the district attorney does not view Jackett as a serious suspect, the court only allows for six hours a week visitation rights and three of those hours are spent driving the long straight road from Provincetown to Sandwich and back, through miles of scrub pine and sand, a road that seems to go nowhere except from one tip of the Cape to the other. At a parking lot littered with fast food wrappers and empty coffee cups near the Sagamore Bridge, the Jacketts and Amyra Chase of Cohassett, the guardian, exchange Ava. The highway is more of an umbilical cord than a lifeline that connects Jackett to his little girl. Jackett is quick to point out that Ava is his seventh child and he will not rest until she is reunited with the rest of the family in their home, one of the two remaining waterfront houses in town still owned by Portuguese fishing families.

MARGARET CARROLL-BERGMAN: Alex Beam of the *Boston Globe* writes, "Jackett was revealed to be the father of Worthington's two-year-old daughter, Ava, and now he is fighting for custody of her. I can't imagine that Manso's book, which describes Jackett as playing a role in the wackiest-ship-in-the-drug-trade deal gone awry, will help his case." Beam is talking about the *Divino Criador*, a boatload of pot smuggled up from Columbia in the early '80s. How is it that the forgotten story is coming out now?

TONY JACKETT: Peter Manso and I were eating lunch at the Blacksmith Shop and I nearly choked when he brought up the baby. Remember, this was a year before I told my wife and I had no contact with Christa. I was also preparing to tell my family about the baby. If there was knowledge of it in the Worthington family, they would have honored Christa's wishes and kept it a secret. I am thinking that if Peter knows about the baby, then a lot of people must know. I thought he had the goods on me and wanted to talk about the drug smuggling. It seemed like pressure.

MCB: You are introduced to the reader in one chapter as "Tony Jackett: The Smuggling Story": "Third-generation fisherman-turnedpot smuggler, now Provincetown's shellfish warden at a salary of \$27,000 a year." "His adventure turned into one of the most bungled dope runs in the history of Ptown." In "Tony and the Columbians," Jackett is quoted as saying, "You know, despite all the changes in Ptown, it's really the same as always. I mean, where else could someone be a dope smuggler and then work for the town in law enforcement?" "Amazingly, Tony-thesmuggler and third-generation Portuguese fisherman was entranced that his son was turning into a Yuppie." It goes on in that vein.

T/: I first read what he wrote right after I had a custody hearing. I'm reading the sections on me and I'm thinking I'm never going to get custody. I thought, My God, Peter, we are going to have to sit down and rewrite this book. This is crazy. He used to say, "I don't tell you how to fish, you don't tell me how to write." I remember reading some of the drug smuggling stuff. I said, "Peter, that never happened. All the drug smuggling in the fleet, that just did not happen." Most of the fishermen were people like my father; they would never do anything like that. Peter is determined to see it his way. Most people cut away the bad parts out of an apple; Peter throws the good parts out.

MCB: You told police that you were approached by a man you used to fish with about bringing a boatload of pot up from Columbia. You thought it over, declined, and suggested a friend of yours, Skip Albanese to captain the boat. The shipment had a street value of \$20-million. The boat was disguised



to look like the Divino Criador, a local fishing boat, so it would blend in with the New England fleet. Albanese was to bring the boat to Boston, but the plan changed at the last minute.

TJ: Skip ended up coming to Provincetown because he got freaked out. There was a Coast Guard buoy tender hauling and setting buoys with a spotlight in Boston Harbor. So he decided to come to Provincetown because he knew how close to the beach he could get without grounding out, close enough where he could jump overboard, walk the breakwater, and call me from the Provincetown Inn. I'm like, Oh my God, this just keeps getting worse.

MCB: Manso does capture the complete idiocy and confusion of a drug shipment coming into Herring Cove during the height of the summer tourist season and the comical depiction of a bunch of drunkards piloting a flotilla of lobster boats trying to locate the drug boat anchored off the National Seashore in broad daylight. A boat not only filled to the gunwales with pot, but also

carrying five machinegun toting Columbians. After a series of mishaps, the eight men on the beach-recruited from local bars to offload the boat—were caught by local police. Manso writes, "Like almost every dope smuggler who gets busted, Tony 'talked' in exchange for leniency."

TJ: I talked because I wanted to talk. There was no deal made. When I made the decision to talk. I could not do it half way. You have to tell it like it happened. None of the guys on the beach did time. That was almost 20 years ago. I was never arrested or charged. I put it all behind me and raised my children in the meantime.

MCB: Your children are terrific.

TJ: It is funny how life takes different turns; maybe this twist was supposed to happen. I look at my wife. I always thought of her as an angel. I think she is and now with this little baby who is like an angel, maybe I could be one. At this point in my life, I've got somebody pulling me up by the back of the shirt, saying, "You are coming with me." That is going to be my role. I could make a difference in this child's life.

MCB: Did you see Christa's body at the murder scene?

TJ: No. When Christa and the baby were discovered, nobody knew what to do with the baby. Members of the rescue squad and the police were asking, Where was the baby's father? Who was the baby's father? Jackett is the baby's father. Francie Watson, Christa's best friend and neighbor, called me. They discovered Christa at 4:30 PM. Francie called me at a quarter to five. I called Cindy Worthington, Christa's aunt. She said, "Yes, it's okay. Come and get the baby." I talked to Toppy, Christa's father. It's okay with everybody. The baby is expected to go with me. Everyone knew that Christa, Susan, and I had developed a relationship.

MCB: Even I knew it. I was at the magazine's publishing party at the Art Association last summer and somebody said the Jacketts are here with Christa Worthington and the baby. I thought, this is kind of weird.

TJ: So did I. I was not ready for this—going out with my wife and having Christa and the baby show up. A little awkward. Christa, I think, expected my wife not to be able to deal with it. Perhaps she wasn't prepared to deal with Susan's kindness. The real tragedy, certainly an extension of this tragedy, is that in time Christa would not have felt threatened by our family. She would have felt a part of it and would have genuinely taken a liking to Susan. We didn't have enough time. In some ways her making this provision in this will for the baby when she was already making a decision to have us involved in Ava's life is conflicting to me. Why would she do that, unless she did not know it was gong to create a problem?

MCB: Most people in their 40s don't think they will soon die. Christa may have. She was a single mother, never married, whose mother recently died, and whose 72-year-old father is in a relationship with a 20-something woman who reportedly has a history of multiple heroin convictions and prostitution.

TJ: 48 Hours dug up footage of Christa appearing on the Leeza Gibbons show, clearly showing that Christa was on a crusade to get pregnant, hook or by crook. I was 50 and flattered by someone who was willing to have this free and loose relationship. You could come and go when you wanted. It was supposed to be about having sex. We can use each other, which she called "European style." Even when I'm leaving, she is not upset that I am leaving to go home. When she tells me she's pregnant, I am thinking, what an idiot, of course she is pregnant. She wanted to get pregnant.

MCB: Was Christa happy about the pregnancy?

TI: She was in the clouds. I knew I would have

to talk about it one day with my wife, but I sasn't going to worry about that just yet. My on was planning his wedding. Christa never felt a part of the Worthington family. She felt like she had no family. When she made the decision to have me tell my family and deal with the responsibility of having fathered this child, I did. Ultimately, I wanted to save my marriage. I was willing to see if it could work like a two-family unit. I never predicted it could work, but it did.

MCB: How were your sons with this?

TJ: They were shocked.

MCB: Let's have Susan enter this conversation, so we can ask her directly when she first realized she might be rearing her husband's child by another woman?

SUSAN JACKETT: I thought we might be rearing Ava the night Christa was found. I just assumed we would have her and raise her. I never thought a thing of it.

MCB: You never thought: I'm taking care of the child of the woman who had an extra-marital affair with Tony?

SJ: I guess a lot of people do not understand that. The only way I can explain it is that Ava is innocent. A child is a gift from God. She is supposed to be here for a reason. How can you resent a child? I've proven that with my two adopted Indian children that I have the capacity to love children who are not my biological children. Tony is the love of my life; he is my husband and she is his daughter. She has a father; she deserves to have the love of a father the way my children did. He is a kind loving man. He never denied the baby was his. He always said that he would like to have a relationship with her if possible; he would pay child support.

MCB: How did Tony tell you about the affair?

SJ: He said, "I have something to tell you." I said, "What?" And he said, "I don't know how I am going to tell you this." And I said, "Gee, is it that bad?" Tony said, "I am in trouble." "Are you in trouble with the IRS?" "No, worse." "The police?" "Worse!" I said, "Worse? What could be worse? What is it?" And, then he blurted out, "I had an affair a few years ago and there is a child." I must have said, "You're kidding," about five times. He said that he hadn't been with her since before she told him she was pregnant. It was not a love affair. She told him she could not get pregnant and they would just use each other sexually. If he had said he loved her and that he had seen her since the baby was conceived, that would have made it far worse. I was shocked and so devastated. It was so weird. Maybe if it had been a raging love affair, I would have known.



CHRISTA AND AVA WORTHINGTON WITH JACKETT'S GRANDDAUGHTER, ETEL AMATO

MCB: What happened the first time that you met Christa?

SJ: Three weeks elapsed. He tried to explain to me who she was. I knew the other Worthingtons. There was a Worthington who used to come in the clinic when I worked there. It turned out it was Christa. Tony and I used to go for rides every afternoon. We were curious to know what Christa wanted of the family and of Tony. Did she want him to give up his paternity rights? Did she want the baby to get to know him? Did she want the family to embrace her? We went over to Christa's house. I staved in the car. He went to the door. I guess the baby was almost asleep. She was nursing the baby. She came out to the car and stood about three feet away from the window. All I felt was a great sadness when I saw her. I looked at the baby. I could see her eyes; she looked just like Tony. So, I knew the baby was his. I did not feel any anger or resentment. Tony stood outside the car and I did all the talking. I asked her, "What do you want? Do you want us to embrace her because we will." I told her I had been on a spiritual journey and she looked at me like I was nuts. She kept saying, "I don't know. I don't know. I don't know what I want. I don't have anybody. I have no one like a family. No family. I would like to have someone with me when I talk to youmaybe my therapist. Would you and Tony be willing to come and meet with him?" I assured her we could resolve this and that we would do anything to make it good and make it better. We waited for her to call and she never did. Christa called her lawyer when we left. Her lawyer called our attorney, Chris Snow, and acted like we went over there in a threatening way. We saw Christa again at the end of May. Six weeks had elapsed. We were talking and Braunwyn, our daughter, said, why don't we invite Christa over and Tony says, "Gee, I don't know." So we talked him into it. As Christa said, she was alone, she did not have a family, she did not have a good relationship with her father. Christa appeared at the door and she had Ava on her hip. I hugged her and

she looked at me and said, "Thank you." I honestly felt we had to make this work. Somehow we had to get along. It was the right thing to do for Ava. Christa was a little uncomfortable, looking around at all the pictures. I think it was the first time that she realized what it meant to be involved with our family. The whole room was like an art gallery of the family. She ended up staying for dinner. It was nice and we invited her again two or three weeks later for dinner. She brought cookies and everyone played with the baby.

MCB: According to Manso, "There was also the question of whether Tony had actually ended his extramarital affair, and detectives weren't completely comfortable with the scenario of him and Susan joining forces 'to share' Ava with the child's natural mother either-over Christmas the three adults had spent time together, just as Susan and Tony had been taking the child out for afternoon car rides. But there was something too enlightening here, something too 'modern."

SJ: I don't know where Peter came up with that. Tony was never alone with Christa. He was calling the house all the time before Tony told me. It seemed once Tony told me (about the affair and the child) and I decided not to kick him out, Peter stopped calling.

TJ: The implication is that Christa and I were seeing each other and now she was going to come out and spill the beans, making it sound as if I could actually have knocked her off. Since telling Susan, we made a pact. I don't go out alone anymore, we are together, we do things together. I didn't go to Christa's house on my own. Susan was understanding, but not that understanding. Peter is trying to get his second book ready and he wanted to know if I would meet with him. "I can't work with you on this, Peter," I said. I learned my lesson.

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Truth and Lies:

Sarasota Film Festival 2002

BY LIZ ROSENBERG

e don't normally expect truth to fall down from a high place and hit us smack in the skull. But that is what happened during the 2002 Film Festival, in Sarasota, Florida. Sarasota resembles Provincetown, if only in being far prettier than the average American city; uncommonly interested in art; and friendlier than one has any right to expect. The film festival ran-galloped-from January 19 through January 26. The skull-smacking took place on the festival's opening night, with the audience touchingly dressed up as if they themselves were the movie stars. It happened during the screening of Door to Door, the made-for-TV movie released this summer, based on the life story of a disabled door-to-door salesman. I took my seat in the back row of the theater, below the projection booth. The full-to-capacity audience waited patiently while the folks in the projection booth tried to get things moving. After 15 or 20 minutes, there was a scuffling sound above, a loud clanging sound below. In between, the film, still in its metal canister, bounced off my head and onto the floor. Someone apologetically retrieved the canister. Twenty minutes into the movie the screen went dead for a minute or two. One of my neighbors leaned in and whispered, "Your head did that."

Well, our heads are always doing the hard work when it comes to movies, or any other effort to get at truth. I can't remember a time when I didn't love the movies. I remember the queen in Snow White hovering over what felt like my particular seat in the movies, holding up the poison apple. Movies often feel closer to life than life itself. They are our own dreams writ large. Hollywood movies may be our country's most powerful exports—we send out into the world a magnified version of the American Dream. The intimate dark of the movie theater makes that dream seem brighter, the way the moon glows in a night sky. Of course movies are also full of lies, but they are no less convincing for all that. What we see on the screen is based on our own nightmares and daydreams, the images projected in front of rather than behind our eyes. As Lionel Trilling once pointed out, Plato's myth of the cave—the elaborate lie projected by shadows on a willing and rapt audience—is nothing more than an ancient precursor of the movies.

I came to the Sarasota Film Festival wondering how movies tell us the truth? How do they lie? and came away with a bump on the skull, a brain full of images.

William Macy, star of *Door to Door* as well as its co-writer, is an actor's actor. In real life he is moviestar handsome, slim, and graceful. He wore an expensive-looking black suit. In movies he manages to look bug-eyed and heartbreaking. Fans may know him best for his role as the deranged husband in Fargo, the gay small-town sheriff in love in Happy Texas; his stellar if brief turn as the ratings expert on the TV show, Sports Night. Macy is unequivocal about truth. "I think it's incumbent on everyone to tell the truth all the time-especially storytellers. And movie-makers are storytellers." He was quick to remind the film festival audience that Door to Door is not strictly factual. It is based on the life story of Bill Porter, a door-to-door home product salesman born with cerebral palsy.

"What happens is nothing happens and he doesn't die." Throughout the movie, Macy deftly captures the salesman's pride and bitterness, his hopefulness, as well as the physical details of his cerebral palsy; the slurred speech, the uneven gait; one arm held awkwardly at his back. The film follows Porter's career from the time he talks himself into his first job. "Give me your worst route," he argues—"you've got nothing to lose"—till he nears retirement, where Macy makes Russell Crowe at the end of A Beautiful Mind look like a kid putting talcum powder in his hair.

Co-authors Macy and Steven Schacter (director) invented details in the life of Bill Porter. But there is a crucial difference, as Macy points out, between invention and lies. "The actor can tell the truth under imaginary circumstances, or he can lie. I think the audience knows the difference. I believe in the wisdom of the audience, the goodness of people."

Life is short, art is long, film festivals are longer. My pursuit of movies-as-truth focused on films that were either flat-out documentaries or, like Door to Door, based on real people and events. The festival's fastest ticket seller was Kandahar, a fictional movie set in real-life Afghanistan. I





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141 commercial st. p-town 508.487.4900 623 tremont st. boston 617.247.6230 took it as a sign that the audience was so desperate to see Afghanistan. The government, military and the press were careful this fall and winter to present their endless reports of Operation Infinite Justice without any disturbing real-life pictures, to render it as unreal as the bright blue storm center on the weatherman's imaginary map. But "the wisdom of the audience, the goodness of people" was hungry—our appetite for truth being no less urgent than our appetite for dreaming. People lined up to see Kandahar; the festival people had to keep adding more show times.

Conversely, movies show us the truth hiding behind what is right in front of our eyes. A good documentary follows poet Allen Ginsberg's dictum: "Notice what you see." Another popular film in the Sarasota Film Festivaland winner of its Best Documentary awardwas Devil's Playground, about real-life goings on of the Amish community and its youth. Part of the film was shot nearby, in Florida. Relatives of people in the film sat there in the festival audience. They answered questions and made comments afterward. You can't spend time in Sarasota or its nearby communities without seeing the Amish at the beaches in long plaincolored dresses and bonnets, in black suspenders and button-down white shirts, beside the flashily dressed European tourists standing half-naked by the sea. But Devil's Playground, brilliantly and delicately directed by the young British filmmaker, Lucy Walker, reveals a side of Amish life most of us don't know about. The Amish sect is based on the notion of freely choosing one's own religious path. When an Amish teenager turns 16, he reaches a time known as rumspring (literally, running around), a chance to experience life on the outside, complete with liquor, drugs, wild parties, and sex. Whether they return to the fold or not-more than 90 percent eventually return to the Amish way of life—is their own decision. Walker follows the lives of four teenagers during their rumspring-nothing in the film is fictionalized or staged, none of it was filmed without the participants' permission. For all that—maybe because of it—Devil's Playground is not just a surprising movie but a shocking one. Not because Amish teenagers are so much wilder than other American teenagers, but because we never dreamed they had it in them; we never noticed what we saw. And the best documentaries remind us that the world is far more interesting, surprising, picturesque, dangerous, or beautiful than we thought.

One of my favorite films was the Norwegian documentary, *Cool and Crazy*, about a male singing group in a tiny Norwegian fishing village close to the North Pole. In one scene the men stand in the icy cold, singing, with a veil of snow blowing across their half-frozen faces. They visit a small town in Russia, drink too much; they sing; they talk about women; they rant about politics; they sing. In *La Tropical*, about a Cuban dance club, an old woman dances in a downpour. The world is big, wild, so much bigger than the movies; so much bigger

in the movies. Documentaries occupy a small, reverential space in the large film industry landscape. They are the lyric poems among the comic books, detective novels and epics. They are the corners of the nave; the tiny church in the village. Think of the best odd moment in a favorite movie-the scene in the bar in the movie Marty, or when the crazed, aging opera singer begins to croon "Some Enchanted Evening" in Crossing Delancey-take that one peculiar moment, redolent of life, expand it, and there's the documentary.

Consider Out of the Closet, Off the Screen: The Life of William Haines-a documentary about Billy Haines, the first openly gay actor in Hollywood. Louis B. Mayers told him to get rid of his longterm lover, or get out of Hollywood. "I'll give up Jimmy," Haines told Mayers agreeably, "if you give up your wife." He was blacklisted in Hollywood and became its most famous "decorator to the stars." Joan Crawford, his friend, client, and defender called his 50-year-long relationship with Jimmy Shields "the most successful marriage in Hollywood." Actor Michael York told his audience at the festival, "There's often a lot more drama going on behind the camera than in front of it." Film, he said, "is an extraordinary, chaotic experience. You're basically seeing photographed thought." The task of an actor is "to wear as many hats as possible with as much dignity as possible. The energy pattern of life is up and down. You're in, you're out. You're hot, you're not. The hardest job is the next one. There's no guarantee, no blueprint. All you have to go on is instinct."

For a business that requires split-second timing, extraordinary collaboration, and large

amounts of money, the movies remain more art than business, and every expert at the festivalyou could tell the experts, because the women were all thin and beautiful, and the men all wore sober black, like priests-talked about chance and luck. Producer, director, and actor Sydney Pollack reminded me of various scary Jewish uncles and cousins I knew as a child. You don't want to ask him a stupid question or spill the soup in his plate. He is grayer, shorter, and sexier than he looks on screen. Pollack was this year's festival's special honored guest, a tribute-or trial-he endured with rough grace and humor. "I go by my gut. Do I want to live with these characters for a year and a half, two years? Do I believe what they're worrying about is worth worrying about?"

When I asked Pollack about movies and truth, he frowned. "We go to the movies," he said, "because we know what truth is. By lying you create an order that doesn't exist-symmetry, a shape, and a form. I've been making circular movies all my life-every movie ends where it began. It's a form that interests me. Three is a magic number. Three sets of three. When I was about 18 I took a dance class and became fascinated by the forms-ABA, ABBA. I've been using those same forms ever since, working with the quadrille, the tango. In the movies, you make events add up to something. You make events illuminate something. Life is more random." He was drinking a martini from an elegant glass at the elegant Ritz Carlton where, waiting for him, I'd just had the most expensive cup of coffee of my life. "We essentially go to the movies because we live rather limited lives-one age at a time, one gender at a time. In the movies I can live other people's lives. We go to the movies because we know what the truth is, and we're looking for something better."

I asked him if this might not be a bad idea, creating a sense of order in art that didn't exist in life. Didn't it create false expectations? False hope? I was thinking of a young couple I'd seen at one of the festival's gala events-they'd linked arms, they toasted each other with champagne and posed for the camera of a local newspaper. Around them, other citizens were dressed in ball gowns and tuxedos, as if they were at the Academy Awards, not under a tent on somebody's lawn. It was lovely, and it was pathetic; life as we imagined it the in the movies. Pollack waved me off again. "We bend expectations. We fall into a film. A book is a private experience. A film is a common experience, immediate and emotional. It's like spying on some else's life. I think it's said that kids don't read anymore. Kids go to movies. People live mosaically-they multi-task. It's a different level of pacing and patience. Someone's got to shoot somebody. You've got to get the gun on the table very quickly. People are hungry for sensation—like getting used to tobasco sauce. I'm not saying it's a good thing."

"Send the model home," he said. "You have to re-imagine it, try and get the heart of it in your head. You eat the book, re-dream it in another language. Re-dreaming it in images. Someone dreamed it verbally. Then you kind of try to see if you can break all the restraints."

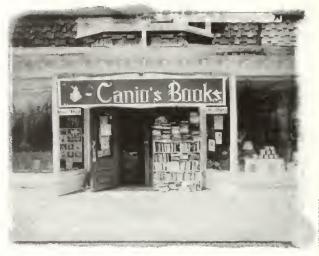
LIZ ROSENBERG's most recent collection of poems is These Happy Eyes (Mammoth Books).



Call Him Canio:

Portrait of a Gentleman Publisher

BY JANE CIABATTARI



CANIO'S BOOKS STOREFRONT

rop by Canio's Books in Sag Harbor, a former whaling village on the East End of New York's Long Island, on a Monday in spring and you might find the founder, Canio Pavone, minding the store. This particular April day, Canio was reading Alessandro Baricco's novel, City, in Italian (Knopf brought it out in English in June). A retired high school language teacher who reads and speaks Spanish, Italian and Japanese, he still teaches Italian privately to students, and is one of the five folk in the village who pick up Corriere della Sera regularly at the 7-11 store near the wharf.

Canio grew up loving books. "As a kid from Brooklyn, I read a lot of Maugham and Conrad," he says. "I was interested in exotic lands. That is before I was able to visit Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, Japan, Italy, France, Greece, and so forth. I love Cervantes. I went through an intense Mishima phase. I'm also interested in the work of Kawabata, Oe, Murakami and other Japanese writers. I like the work of Leonardo Sciascia and Baricco. I'm a big fan of Don DeLillo, and of course of the American classics by Faulkner, Melville, Twain, Edith Wharton. And Patricia High-

Today he retrieves a special order book for a customer–Edith Wharton's 1929 novel Hudson River Bracketed - and chats about the history of Canio's Books and of Canio's Editions, the small press he started in 1992 as a spin-off to the shop, following the model of City Lights in San Francisco and Shakespeare & Co. in Paris.

For many years Canio dreamed of owning a bookshop. He collected books and often drove from Long Island into New York City on weekends to sell them on the streets of the Lower East Side. In 1980 he was on jury duty in Riverhead and took a drive an hour or so east to see the village he'd read about in Sag Harbor resident Joe Pintauro's novel, Cold Hands. Shortly beyond Otter Pond on Sag Harbor's Main Street he spotted a storefront for rent, learned that the rent was low (around \$200 a month), and the rest is East End history.

Canio's Books announces itself with a hand-painted blue sign over the doorway. The Canio logo is a stylized version of Enrico Caruso as Canio, the clown in I Pagliacci, atop a stack of books. The logo, created by Canio's wife Nohra Barros, a Colombian-born visual artist, graces the books he publishes. Numerous local artists and photographers have created portraits of Camo's Books over the years (Lew Zacks's oil painting and Ann Chwatsky and Kathryn Szoka's photographs are best known). Newcomers who come to browse through the jumble of used, new, and rare books are treated with as much reverence as better-known customers like Jon Robin Baitz, Billy Joel, Cynthia Ozick, and Kurt Vonnegut.

As in the early days, today the outside windows at Canio's display new books and old, antique cameras and an ancient Underwood typewriter, a bust of Shelley, posters for upcoming readings at Canio's, and other places.

When Canio's Books opened in 1980, there was nothing like it on the East End. "There were occasional readings by celebrity authors at Guild Hall in East Hampton, and bookstore readings hadn't reached the Hamptons, so Canio's became a home for writers, like the 92nd Y come east," says Marjorie Appleman, a playwright associated with Circle Repertory Theater.

The first Canio's reading was the first Saturday in May 1981. The reader: Nelson Algren, the brawling Chicago author of Man with the Golden Arm, who had moved to Sag Harbor that spring. Algren walked around the corner from his rented cottage to Canio's on Saturday mornings for coffee with Canio and local writers including Elizabeth Fisher, founding editor of Aphra, the pioneering feminist arts quarterly, William Gaddis, Peter Matthiessen, and Pintauro. Algren insisted on being paid to read, so Canio charged a couple of bucks at the door. The New York Times got wind of the reading and ran an announcement. The place was so overrun Canio had to borrow folding chairs from the funeral home down the street. Algren sat in his favorite well-worn easy chair to perform, improvising several short stories and poems from a set of index cards. Afterward, he gathered up the money in the kitty and took Canio and a gang of friends out to dinner.

The first Labor Day after he opened, Canio organized an all-night reading of Moby-Dick in honor of Melville's time in Sag Harbor and its origins as a whaling village. Actors like Ben Gazzara and Viveca Lindors joined writers and poets to read passages through the night. Canio kept it up for years, until it got so big it had to be moved to the Whalers Church.

Since its founding, more than a hundred readings, book parties, art openings, and concerts have been held each year at Canio's. Among the authors who have read there: Russell Banks, Caroline Blackwood, Robert Owen Butler, Edwige Danticat, Betty Friedan, Alan Furst, David Ignatow, Carolyn Kizer, Carole Maso, Walter Mosley, Richard Reeves, Larry Rivers, Daniel Stern, Harvey Shapiro, Wilfrid Sheed, and Diane Wakoski.

"I've read there a lot over the years, and it's always been a touchstone," says the poet Robert Long, a Canio's author. "There's something about this space that feels like homethe rickety lectern, the little chairs jammed together, and me smushed up in the bookshelves back there—it's consoling to be among friends."

Fran Castan remembers approaching Canio for the first time to read at the shop. "I had studied poetry here and there, I had begun to accumulate a body of work, but I hadn't given a reading anywhere. I tooled over to Canio's with a packet of my credentials-I had had an Academy of America Poets prize, an NYU fellowship, the Lucille Medwick award from the Poetry Society of America, a MacDowell fellowship, but I didn't think they would be good enough. He said, 'You don't have to show me anything, if you want to read, that's good enough for me.' It was so telling of the kind of person he is. Later he went on to publish my work."

In 1987, a group of Canio's admirers (Lillian Braude, Kelly Patton, Paddy Noble, Diana Chang, Philip and Marjorie Appleman, and others) arranged a ceremony at Guild Hall in East Hampton to recognize Canio's contributions to the literary life. They named it "Call Me Canio" after Melville's "Call me Ishmael." They rounded up 200 poets and other writers who had read at Canio's over the years, and gave each of them 90 seconds. Philip Appleman was MC. He devoted his 90 seconds to a "scribble" that began,

"Ask any singer, from bass to sopranio,

"Ask any buck private, or big capitanio,

"Till you lose your mens sana in corpore sanio-

"There's not rhyme in the whole English language for Canio."

"There was more," says Appleman, "but fortunately it's been forgotten." After an evening of hilarity, Canio was awarded a laurel wreath and his wife Nohra a bouquet. This outpouring of gratitude encouraged Canio to expand the reading series and to initiate Canio's Editions, his

small press, in 1992. At the time, he said, "In the alphabet of reasons for wanting to start Canio's Editions, making a profit was 'Z."

Why, then? "Running the readings, I heard much good work that was not available, and thought it would be great to start a small press to publish it," he says. In the beginning, a number of small publishers on the East End of Long Island were helpful, he says, including Marty and Judith Shepard of the Permanent Press in Sag Harbor. "Bill Henderson of Pushcart Press has given me hints about distribution and other aspects of the business," he adds, "and George Braziller has been very encouraging.'

His first publication was Powder and Echo, Dan Giancola's series of poems about the Revolutionary War on Long Island, which has been compared to Edgar Lee Masters' Spoon River Anthology. Then came Anthony

Brandt's People along the Shore, a collection of short stories, poems, and a memoir with a seaside theme. More poets followed-Edward Butscher, Fran Castan, Cyril Christo, Pat Falk, Helen Ruth Freeman, Jennie Hair, William Hathaway, Robert Long, Daniel Thomas Moran, Allen Planz, Davida Singer, Pat Sweeney, Rob Stuart, Sandra Vreeland, and Beverley Wiggins Wells. An anthology-For David Ignatow-included work by 47 poets, including Philip Appleman, Marvin Bell, Siv Cedering, Diana Chang, Paul Mariani, Joyce Carol Oates, and Diane Wakoski.

Allen Planz, former poetry editor of The Nation, whose book was published by Canio Editions, says, "The series is generally good, cosmopolitan, modernist, and very catholic in taste. Before Canio, there was Street Press, in Port Jefferson, which published about 35 poets before it went out of the business in the early 1980s. Graham Everett, who reads regularly at Canio's, ran it. They were the only two publishing poetry on Long Island, particularly Long Island poets."

Canio also published Peter Lipman-Wulf"s Period of Internment, a memoir by the Germanborn American sculptor who was interned with other German Jewish artists and intellectuals at Camp Les Milles in southern France at the outbreak of World War II. A couple of times over the years, Canio has published literary fiction-a surreal novel called The Literal Truth: Rizzoli Dreams of Eating the Apple of Earthly Delights, the sequel to a well-received first novel by Mark Ciabattari; Three Cautionary Tales by Virginia Christian, Hope Harris, and Erika Duncan.

Canio received an honorary degree in 1999 from Southampton College for his role in fostering the East End literary community; his fans threw surprise birthday parties. When he announced he was selling the shop, there was a hue and cry that galvanized the writers of the area, saving the literary landmark. Maryann Calendrille, a writer and teacher, and Kathryn Szoka, a photographer, took over the shop on about their friendships with Steinbeck. (Not too long ago, Pintauro brought Studs Terkel by to sit in the Nelson Algren easy chair.) Readers this summer and fall will include Edward Albee, Star Black, Helen Harrison, Bill Knott, Judith Miller, Molly Peacock, Colson Whitehead, and John Wray. In August Canio's Books will commemorate the 75th anniversary of the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti with a performance of Italian folk music by Stefano Sanfillippo.

Since selling the shop, Canio and Nohra spend several months a year in Acerenza, a tiny village in Italy that seems to be the "land of the Canios." The patron saint, the mayor, many of the local men bear his unusual first name.



MOBY DICK READING

October I, 1999-exactly 19 years after Canio started it. "We both loved the place, and had felt connected to it for years; we couldn't imagine Sag Harbor without it," says Maryann. "I didn't want this shop to become part of the 'vanishing landscape," says Kathryn, whose photographic series "Vanishing Landscapes" documents farms and other landmarks that have been lost to development. In addition to continuing the reading series, they have restored the gallery space, and show local artists like Jeanelle Myers, Joe Hanna, Peter Solow, and Ruth Jacobsen.

Canio is their compare, as Maryann puts it, using the Italian term for a father, mentor, or adviser. A good bookstore can be a quiet sanctuary. Indira Ganesan, a novelist and newcomer to Sag Harbor, says, "When I'm feeling lost and friendless, browsing in bookstores, seeing old familiar volumes makes me feel whole again. I accepted a job at Southampton College thinking I'd find a seaside artist colony like Provincetown, and indeed found it at Canio's."

In mid-January, a crowd showed up during a pelting snowstorm to hear Mark Catalano read a short story that had just appeared in The Gettysburg Review. For the centennial of John Steinbeck, who spent his last years in Sag Harbor, Budd Schulberg and Joe Pintauro reminisced

Watching over the store while he is away, hanging in a frame in the fiction section, is a portrait of St. Canio, the patron saint of Acerenza.

Canio went into small press publishing not being sure how long he would stick with it. "Here we are 10 years later, and I'm still at it," he says. "Probably because I only publish a few books each year. If you have a big budget and publish a lot of books each year, you could quickly lose a lot of money. It gives me pleasure to put together a handsome book, to publish work that might otherwise not have been published."

Hanging in a frame near the front door, a poem by Walt Whitman, "This Is What You Should Do," begins:

Love the earth and sun and the animals, Despise riches, give alms to everyone that asks, Stand up for the stupid and crazy

Canio says, "That's what this shop is about. It's not an emporium."

Jane Ciabattari is a regular reader at Canio's. She is the author of Stealing the Fire: Stories, the 22nd title from Canio's Editions.

Architecture Here and Now:

Site, Light, and Wind

BY GREG O'BRIEN

ape Cod has a lasting impression on children. It's natural and built environment, muted colors, and purity of light evoke the innocence and simplicity of an earlier time. I was drawn to the Cape as a child. I remember as a young boy marveling at the flats where the tide goes out in Brewster for almost a mile; it was as if someone had pulled a plug. I wondered where all the water went, and why. I remember the first night I sat on a dune in the highlands of Truro looking up at a moonless sky, stark and black, flecked with millions of bright stars. The sight was exhilarating, yet I felt so very small. The graceful herring gulls skimmed the surface of the sea in search of another meal, and I was in awe as the waves broke beneath them.

There was peace, also, in the graceful, snug cottages and barns with their graying shingles, stately rows of clapboard, and steeply pitched roofs—a stark contrast to the suburbs of New York City, where I grew up. The Cape made me feel I had escaped into the past. Later, as a writer living here I began to appreciate the need to sustain the fantasy with thoughtful construction.

The practice of architecture is "one of the great arts," wrote the world-renowned architect and teacher Cesar Pelli in his book, Observations. We find proof of this, he said, in the depth of emotion that good buildings inspire in us: "A building in a landscape not only enjoys views but also becomes part of the view and of the character of a place. He observed that there were no "tricks or formulas" for making a structure fit appropriately and respectfully in a valued context. "What is necessary is the intention to do so, the conviction that our responsibility to the place is greater than our allegiance to any aesthetic system."

Key issues of art and responsibility, efficiency and ethics, rely on the architect. Pelli said, "We need a firm intellectual backbone, deeply felt ideals, and a moral compass to act honorably, because the contemporary world has placed many temptations and pitfalls in our path. Our actions affect our work, our constituency, and our profession. We owe it to them and to ourselves to do our very best.'

Pelli's words ring true throughout Cape Cod, Nantucket, and Martha's Vineyard where architecture is practiced in its purest, most understated form on a landscape that defines the built environment perhaps more than anywhere in America. Here, in places, natural and manmade forms create a living collage of color, shape, and texture. Since the Pilgrims learned from the indigenous Indians how to live here, generations of architects have tried to improve on it.

Pelli's protege, John DaSilva, an architect with the Chatham firm of Polhemus, Savery, and DaSilva, believes that "it is our role not just to preserve what we have, but to make it better." DaSilva studied under Pelli at Yale's School of Architecture and later worked at his New Haven firm for nearly a decade.

"Preservation suggest that we keep everything the way it is," DaSilva said. "It denies the fact of evolution. Architects and builders play a fundamental role in respecting the spirit of place in the face of change. It is not simply enough to preserve. We need to understand how we impact a place—contributing, never detracting. I don't think that means we're slavish to replicating historic buildings as if we existed in Disneyland."

Peter Polhemus, MIT-trained and founder of Polhemus, Savery, DaSilva, clearly agrees. "We have a responsibility to understand both the natural environment and the built environment, and design and build in a way that enhances the continuity between them." Reverence for the land, without putting too fine a point on it, is universal among the region's architects.

There is an elegance in being understated," said award-winning building and landscape architect Paul Krueger. Though his firm is based in Cambridge, he works extensively on the Outer Cape and exclusively in residential design and related landscape architecture. Krueger, trained at Harvard, participated in the design of some of the university's most prominent buildings. "An understated building doesn't get in the way of showing off the beauty of the environment."

The design, after all, should be an extension of the land," said architect J. Graham Goldsmith, whose residential design firm has offices on Nantucket and in Burlington, Vermont.

Goldsmith studied architecture at the University of Pennsylvania under the brilliant Louis I. Kahn. "A poorly designed home," Goldsmith said, "offends the landscape. We have an obligation to build structures that are an extension of the landscape."

What Polhemus, DaSilva, Krueger, Goldsmith, and others like them have in common is an unshakable commitment to do their "best work," as Pelli urges, and in doing so advance the cause of architecture on the Cape and Islands. They believe that designing and building is more a privilege than a business opportunity, one that comes with an unspoken challenge to offer more than a view, even if it means rejecting a project because it falls short of the standard.

Just how successful they are in influencing others by raising the level of architecture will determine in many ways the future of the region, as development pressures increase for strip malls and subdivisions that are more appropriate in suburban Boston, New York, and New Jersey. Consider the facts: trained architects design less than two percent of the buildings on the Cape and Islands; collectively, almost a third of the land in the region is ripe for development. It all adds up to a potential to change the face of the region.

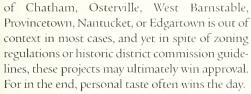
While there are numerous well-designed vernacular buildings on the Cape and Islands and some extraordinary examples of 18th and 19th century architecture, the number of buildings "misplaced" in size, style, or location is increasing. That's not to say all large homes are anathema to the Cape and Islands; there are plenty of sizable and impressive historic structures along Route 6A on the Cape, in the heart of Nantucket's cobblestone village district, and on the Vineyard waterfront.

Well-proportioned contemporary designs make up a significant part of the region's architectural heritage, particularly the works of architects like Serge Chermayeff, Carl Koch, Marcel Breuer, and Eero Saarinen, Pelli's mentor. All fled Europe in the 1940s and built exemplary contemporary homes in the Wellfleet woods off dirt roads near pristine freshwater ponds and on the hills of Truro and Provincetown.

Key issues are context and location; what is suitable for one site, may not be for another. A contemporary structure in the village districts



(CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE) KRUEGER ASSOCIATES. LESSEN RESIDENCE, TRURO; J. GRAHAM GOLDSMITH: HOUSE ON NANTUCKET; POLHEMUS, SAVERY, DaSILVA: HOUSE IN THE CANNON HILLS



In the meantime, architects Polhemus, DaSilva, Krueger and Goldsmith are committed to sharing their design experiences with clients and prospective clients to inspire them to make better choices about design and scale. Even for traditionalists, appropriate design and scale can be as inventive as the mix of colors on an artist's pallet.

"In general, my buildings are without style," said Krueger, a self-described minimalist, who oversaw the renovation of Provincetown Town Hall in 1991 and is actively involved in the planned renovation of Truro Town Hall. "I have a great appreciation for older buildings erected by unknown, anonymous builders. No one knows who built these native structures. I am very enthusiastic about local craftsmen and carpenters, their way of life, and the way they have managed to build without trying to do anything that is excessively dramatic.'

On issues of context and site selection, choices are further complicated by the fact that homeowners today want to build in locations early settlers avoided. "The traditional Cape form was derived out of a need to hunker down," said Polhemus, whose design philosophy is perhaps broader than Krueger's. "These were inland houses, seeking protection from the sea. Now people are seeking a visual and emotional connection to the sea, and we are faced with building on sites that in the 18th and 19th century would have been considered undesirable." Goldsmith is keenly aware that designing poses a special challenge on Nantucket "where you are completely out of sight of land on a windswept island."

There is a marvelous simplicity of form that defines early Cape and Island architecture—lines, angles, and shapes that mirror a weathered landscape. The architecture is self-effacing and austere, stark and pleasantly awkward—a reflection

of the values of the early settlers. The early Cape Cod House, squat, rectangular boxes held together by a gable roof, stands out especially in a stark landscape. "It sits very close to the ground and generally faces south, and could ride out storms that could flatten" other homes, wrote Stanley Schuler in his book, The Cape Cod House. "It has an unbroken gable pitched steeply enough to

provide living space with headroom underneath. The facade is approximately eight feet high. From sills to roof peak, the house measures approximately 20 feet. It has a massive chimney that rises through the roof ridge and is, in the large houses, centrally located between the gable ends. It is of frame construction. The walls are clad with wood shingles or clapboards. The roof is wood-shingled."

There are three styles of the generic Cape house, with numerous hybrids: The half-Cape or half house, about 20 feet wide, with one window on each side of the front door; the three-quarter Cape, about 28 feet wide, with enough frontage for two windows to one side of the door and one window to the other side; and the full Cape or "double house," about 34 to 40 feet long, with a centered front door and two windows to either side. While the floor plan of the Capes vary, all include a kitchen, living area, and bedroom or den on the first floor. Some Cape's were build with more elaborate gambrel roofs. Many fine examples of early Capes can be found along the backroads of Truro, along Route 6A in Barnstable and Sandwich, and on Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard.

Over the years, the architecture of the Cape and Islands became more diverse; homeowners became less concerned with shelter and more interested in comfort, style, and worldly influ-





ence. This gave way to variety: the Saltbox (its short front roof and long slanting back give it the look of a saltbox container), Colonial, Federal, Greek Revival, Victorian, and Gothic Revival-a more complex architectural vocabulary than many realize.

Today some architects are designing an eclectic blend of the above, honoring earlier traditions while reflecting the needs of the 21st century a concept called "evolutionary architecture." Kevin Lynch in his book, What Time Is This Place, notes that every built environment should have a sense of place and that one should be able to mark time by the evolution of buildings in a town. Polhemus studied with Lynch at MIT.

The evolution of architecture in a manner that mirrors an earlier time has set the region apart from most communities outside New England, and if the area is to keep its clear, stately reflection, the mantra of preserving the past literally needs to be hammered home.

Polhemus, DaSilva, Krueger, and Goldsmith articulate this as masters of their profession, not always agreeing on the finer points of style, context, and size.

While Polhemus and DaSilva feel a strong responsibility to design structures that generally "fit in" with the landscape, they reserve the right to design in unconventional ways where appropriate. Like Krueger and Goldsmith, most of

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"We have an obligation to design good buildings, buildings that have intellectual and artistic integrity," said DaSilva. "Sometimes that involves continuing historically established patterns, and sometimes it involves contrasts to those patterns. We strive to improve the context by adding something appropriate or by transforming something that is inappropriate.

"Adding on" to buildings by integrating elements from various styles is a practice as old on the Cape and Islands as gathering oysters. But it's not just a matter of simply collecting what is given. Polhemus said, "You must study the architectural context and select from it in a way that demonstrates the evolution of time."

Always there needs to be a proper transition from yesterday to today, an architectural synthesis of past and present, said Goldsmith. "I don't respect a reproduction of an antique house. That's like reproduction furniture, devoid of living impulse and not real to me. You can take the context of these historic houses and interpret them in today's design; you can be creative without restricted to replicating established details."

Krueger's training in landscape architecture drives his design philosophy. "I never waiver in my commitment to the connection between the house and land," he said. "They are inseparable." So inseparable that Krueger designs "outside rooms"—distinctive landscaped areas for sitting, gardening, or walking, "I try to avoid big grassy lawns. Instead I provide windbreaks, places where people can be outside and sheltered from the wind."

This reverence for the land is manifested in how these architects adapt their design to natural variables like wind, light, and site while dealing with diverse elements that range from style, to size, to window placement, to interior layout, and even to client communications.

Wind plays a strong role in Krueger's designs. "One of the things I determine when I first look at a site is where the wind blows from in summer and in other seasons," he said. "In summer, homeowners want a breeze; in winter they want shelter from the howling wind. You try to come up with places that are shielded but sunny. You try to design for all seasons."

In designing their own homes, these architects have enacted their individual ideas, choosing to build where they most enjoy working. Krueger's bayside Truro home has three living units, one of them winterized, that can be enjoyed separately or interactively. The units, which rise up a sandy glacial deposit out of a grove of locust trees, are connected by balconies, porches, decks, and boardwalks, and culminate in a watchtower that offers a magnificent treetop view. The design conjures up images of fishing shacks, old barns, and boat sheds.

Goldsmith's home in stately Siasconset on

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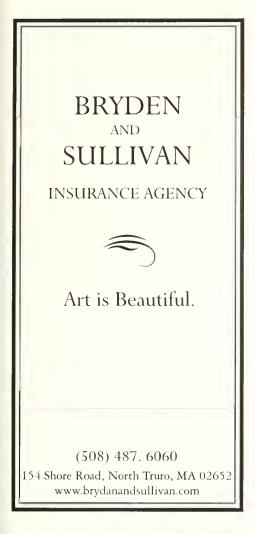
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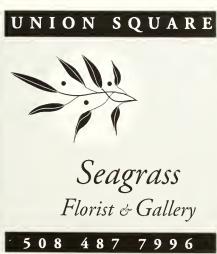
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Nantucket's weather-beaten east side is an inspiring sampling of many styles, with influences from Nantucket, Vermont, the Adirondack Mountains, and Scotland (plenty of stone). Polhemus recently completed work on his home on an old country lane near the lip of Chatham's Pleasant Bay. The shingle-style home is orientated to the street in atypical fashion, with secondary uses occupying the front, eastward elevation, and main living spaces-the kitchen, living room, and bedroom-facing south to take advantage of the lot's natural light, wooded privacy, and relatively level grades. DaSilva and his wife, also an architect, recently completed design and construction of a hybrid contemporary, shingle- and cottage-style home on a steep hillside on Chatham's Stage Island. The house incorporates worldly influences from the English countryside to the San Francisco Bay areavenues that ships, historically on "stage" in the adjacent harbor, may have visited.

Light plays a fundamental role in all their design decisions. The ethereal quality of Cape and Island light, particularly in Provincetown Harbor, Pleasant Bay, and on the east side of Nantucket and the Vineyard where the sun gently glances off the water and on to a spectacular, almost haunting, sandy landscape, is unmatched anywhere in the country, perhaps with exception of Santa Fe where clear mountain air and sandy tones create a similar showcase. Light is the true giver of space," said Goldsmith. "It creates all the mood, character, and atmosphere."

Placement of windows is essential in capturing light's variety of moods. Goldsmith, Krueger, and Polhemus use more windows than earlier designers. "I want as much light coming in as possible," said Goldsmith. "Its reflection at different times of day and in different seasons create atmosphere in a home." Krueger's windows are understated, "sized to human scale," while the windows of Goldsmith and Polhemus are more rectangular, a matter of professional and client preference.

"It takes a strong client to create an appealing building," said Polhemus, quoting his mentor, Cambridge-based architect Kyu Sung Woo, who has designed buildings throughout the world. Good client communication is the cornerstone of any design plan. Before preliminary plans are drawn, architects meet with clients discerning their needs and walking the site at numerous times of day. Unlike homes of the 18th and 19th century, homeowners today prefer open floor plans where kitchen, dining room, and living spaces all flow together. Flexibility is a contemporary priority.

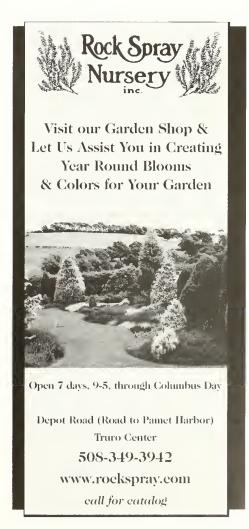
"I usually like to have the kitchen on the east to take advantage of the morning sun, and living and dining areas facing south where there's plenty of sunlight," said Goldsmith, "But sometimes you have a property with a wonderful view facing the water and you need to take advantage of it. So you find another way of getting light into the areaperhaps siting the structure toward the north.

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It may be a longer, narrower house with rooms single loaded so you are getting light coming in over the shoulder from the south, penetrating through the space facing north."

Polhemus asks clients to gather images of architectural features that appeal to them, placing them in a loose-leaf notebook that serves as a handbook for design. Like Goldsmith and Krueger, he tries to steer the client to make pleasing design decisions.

Krueger asks clients to draft a narrative, husbands separately from the wives, on how they visualize the house and how they see themselves spending time in it. "It's a matter of communication, an interview process," said Krueger. "We discuss how the house is going to be different from the one they live in now, whether the new house is a summer place or for year-round use. Everyone has a certain lifestyle, and that should be reflected in the design."

Is size an issue?

"Absolutely," said Krueger, whose homes average 3000 square feet. "Something in the neighborhood of about 2000 square feet is about the size and scale for a proper building; after that additional space should be incremental, broken into components." Size should be a function of need. "A client who has a large family or frequent house guests will need the room. But if someone feels they need a 3000-square-foot living room, then we need to discuss it to understand why. Otherwise the space is superfluous, simply pretentious. That's the part I wouldn't be able to deal with. It doesn't fit for me. It diminishes the land, which is precious."

Polhemus and DaSilva take exception to the term "trophy home," a pejorative for expansive, expensive homes built with stock market or dot-com money. "Size is an issue for some, but not for us," said Polhemus, whose homes range from 1800 square feet to 7500 square feet. "It is about quality and character. The term 'trophy home' seems to be used in the local press, with reverse snobbery, to describe any new house that is bigger than its neighbor's. We are opposed to houses that are ugly, badly designed, and poorly sited-no matter what the size. Rude ostentation is only occasionally present on the Cape and Islands. One cannot ignore the personality of the people who live in these often spectacular homes."

Taking aim at the snobbery charge, he said one of the largest and most expensive homes the firm recently completed was built for a family that has vacationed here most of their lives, a good part of it spent camping at Nickerson State Park. "The family's new house is the result of a lifetime of work, saving, planning, and dreaming. It is not a prize for something unearned."

Goldsmith, who designs homes that average from 3000 to 7000 square feet, said his projects tend to avoid massing. "When I'm designing a large home, I try to break it up into a complex of buildings—a main house, guest house, and maybe a studio over a

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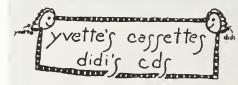
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garage-creating almost a campus."

Like Krueger and Polhemus, Goldsmith is offended by huge, inappropriately sited monuments that say, "Here I am exposed behind huge sheets of gleaming glass. Everyone can know how I desire to be seen." Goldsmith follows the advice of his mentor Louis I. Kahn who taught him "to have the right amount of square footage where you need it, and not too much where you don't."

In the final analysis, it will be the design decisions of many property owners that will determine our attachment to the land we build on. Like colors on a canvas, the structures fleck the landscape for good or ill. Architects are denied the freedom of artists to create without demand or use. But they can influence by the quality of their work. Polhemus, DaSilva, Krueger and Goldsmith are optimistic. "The design level is higher here because homeowners demand it," said DaSilva.

"I think a self-selected group of people elect to live or retire here," added Polhemus. "They tend to be different from the types who settle in Florida, Phoenix, or California. People here are attracted to the beauty, and it is reflected in their lifestyles. Perhaps they have a greater appreciation and sophistication of the natural and built environment than many in other parts of the country. Those attracted to the Cape and Islands are people who place a priority on natural beauty rather than mere convenience."

Underscoring the reality of homeowners owning the future, Krueger was asked in a recent Boston Globe interview about the best part of designing a home. "Without question," he said with clear conviction, "it's the day the owners move in. I am so happy because they are happy! We have done something together. Now it's their house, no longer mine."

GREG O'BRIEN is editor and president of the Stony Brook Group, a publishing and communications company based in Brewster. He is the author/editor of several books about the Cape and has written for numerous newspapers and magazines.



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A Conversation:

Hunter O'Hanian and Christine McCarthy

Trained as a lawyer, Hunter O'Hanian took over as Executive Director of the Fine Arts Work Center more than five years ago, making him the longest-serving Director at the Center. Since then, FAWC has been blessed with balanced budgets, strengthened programs, and greater visibility and community involvement. Last year, he began teaching a course in financial management for nonprofit organizations in the graduate arts administration program at Boston University. He recently sat down with Christine McCarthy, the new Executive Director of the Provincetown Art Association and Museum, to talk about financial management issues.

HUNTER O'HANIAN: You were at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston before you came to the Art Association. Tell me a little about what you did there.

CHRISTINE McCARTHY: I started out as the gallery supervisor and then I moved into operations, education, and then I started working with personnel policies, procedures and security. I was responsible for many of the negotiations, which led to the ICA's acquisition of the Fan Pier site in Boston.

HOH: What brought you to Provincetown and the Art Association?

CM: Seven years is enough time to spend in one place. I was at a point where it was time to make a change. I'd been coming to Provincetown for about twelve years. When I applied for the job. I wasn't really thinking about it as my only option, but after my interview, I changed the way I thought about the position and considered what I might be able to do for this organization.

HOH: Talk a little about financial management for non-profit organizations. Some people think it's a silly idea.

CM: I think the first thing people need to understand about a board is that it's a volunteer position—they are volunteering their time to promote the mission of an organization. For my board, I think the fiscal responsibility lies with making sure we have enough money to pay our bills and put on exhibitions and programs. The board is to oversee operations, not micro-manage the comings and goings of the organization. The director, CFO, treasurer, and auditor should provide the financial credibility. They must know where the money is going and where it comes from. It's the board's responsibility to make sure that the money is being spent on the organization's mission. At the Art Association, we have a Finance Committee that meets bi-monthly. The bookkeeper and I bring the monthly finances to the Committee and we review them line item by line item. A more user-friendlier version is presented to the Board of Trustees so they know what is going on. That way, if they're stopped on the street and asked a question about the Art Association they might be able to answer it. In order to do their jobs, they have a right to know where every dollar is coming from and where it is going.

HOH: How helpful have you found budgeting in program management?

CM: Budgets act as the main guideline of our organization. When I do a budget I like to be realistic. It's nice to think that you could get something from a new foundation but you have to be very realistic in terms of the availability of the funds, in terms of the economy and the things that are happening around you and in the world. You have to be aware of that. The budget sets a tone for the entire year. I think that sticking to the budget is very important and is what drives the organization.

HOH: I don't know how to plan a program without drafting a budget first.

CM: Some committee and board people don't understand the importance of a budget, and they think programs can happen without one. But it's our job to let them know we can stay within our guidelines, pull off a program, and still live within our means.

HOH: Let's talk about everybody's favorite topic: tax filings, financial statements and audits. [Laughter] Some people aren't aware we prepare these reports and that they play a big role in management.

CM: When you say audit, I think people think of it as a negative word, like you've done something bad with your taxes. For us, the audit is one of the best exercises we do in a year because it really accounts for where every single dollar goes and whether the organization is staying within its mission and is thus eligible for the continuation of its 501(c)3 status. In many instances, that sta-

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tus can be jeopardized because people don't understand the nonprofit tax law. Filing our tax returns and paying attention to the tax laws always has to be at the forefront of our minds. When you're getting ready for your audit, and you should always be getting ready for your audit, you have to have your finances organized and available. Once they come together in that form, it's really like painting a picture of your organization. When you send it out to potential funders or people who are interested in your programming, they get to see what your financial situation is really like.

HOH: Every nonprofit's audit and 990 tax return are on line at Guidestar.org. It's all out there for the world to see. I feel like it's my annual report card.

CM: [Laughing] That's how I feel! It sets the tone for what areas need improvement and what areas are sustaining. It's the guiding document for your future years and your future planning.

HOH: How does that translate to the health of the organization?

CM: I think it says it all. Maybe you can fudge some things, but numbers are one area where you really have to be honest. It's a way to track a million different things. To apply for a grant you must have this sound document. In

recruiting a new board member or bringing new people on, a financial overview of the organization will make them feel better about the place and know that you are stable.

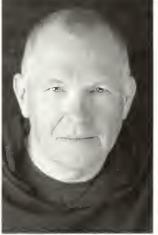
HOH: Let's talk a little about internal financial controls and financial procedures. There are different types out there, for different types of organizations.

CM: Your finances must be kept secure, on computer, with a password and always accessible on site. Procedures must be in place in terms of classifying funds, what they are for, whether restricted or unrestricted. I think it's very important to pay attention to where the money is going and who is handling it. Are systems in place to avoid having the same person doing deposits and bank statement reconciliation?

HOH: Have you had any experiences with strategic planning?

CM: Organizations should always have some kind of strategic planning process underway as a work in progress. Every few years you need to sit down and re-assess your goals and the types of changes contemplated within the organization. Change is good because doing the same thing year after year after year gets boring and prevents growth in the organization. The visual arts field is changing every day







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based on what's happening in the world and what's hot or not. For us especially, with me coming in as a new director, we have some capital needs that are essential to our organization's survival. And by stepping back and developing a strategic plan that can really assess our strengths and weaknesses we can get a good handle on a successful future. A three- to five-year plan, comparing where we see ourselves and where we want to go, would be ideal. We want to keep in mind the big picture: what we want to obtain for the organization. Why are we here? We know how it started, but where do we want to go? I think a strategic plan is absolutely essential. It helps you assess your organization with an objective point of view and sometimes it's really nice to give yourself a wake-up call in terms of where you're going.

HOH: Another topic: a new nonprofit in town, Campus Provincetown, which you and I are both involved in.

CM: One of my major misconceptions when I came to Provincetown was that the non-profits really did not collaborate much, which I thought was unusual since we're all doing something different. It didn't make sense not to collaborate because we do not compete. We all offer different things; we all have different board people. Some of the funders overlap, but that's okay because we're offering good things and why wouldn't people want to support good things offered by other organizations?

Collaboration shows the strength of the community, and shows the strength of the arts in this town. Campus Provincetown, for example, brings people here in the off-season, it helps the economy of Provincetown and I think that's what we're all aiming for, it's not about competing individually.

HOH: The fact that we all share ideas is so useful, whether we are talking about health insurance, computer systems, or event scheduling.

CM: Non-profit problems, regardless of the size of the organization, are very much the same and it's great to have a sounding board of peers. Sometimes you need a chance to brainstorm and figure out how to get to the next step. It can be frustrating to work in the nonprofit world; but to have colleagues, who are in similar situations, whether good or bad, can only help.

HOH: It sounds to my ear like we're talking about non-profits behaving like big corporations or for-profit businesses. Is that's really what's going on here?

CM: We have to behave like a business because we are businesses. We also serve the public. Our finances, by law, must be accountable. We follow laws defined by the state. We stay within those rules, like a for-profit, but we are obliged provide a public function for social good.

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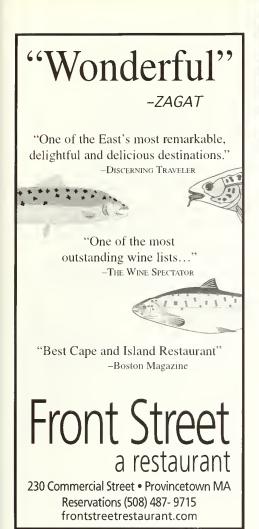
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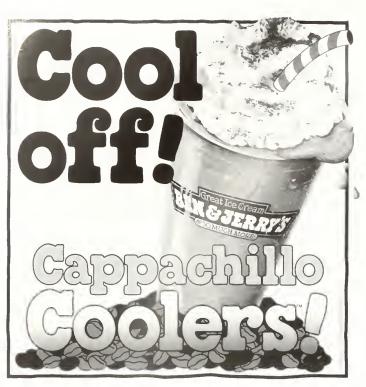
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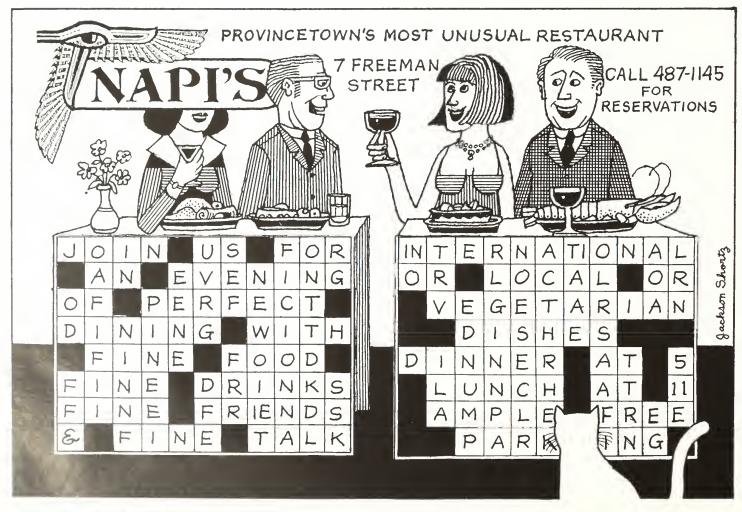


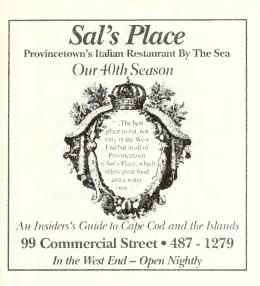


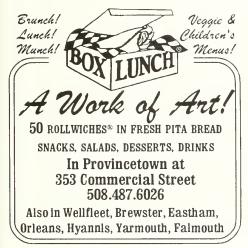


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NAPI'S 508.487.1145

Open year round

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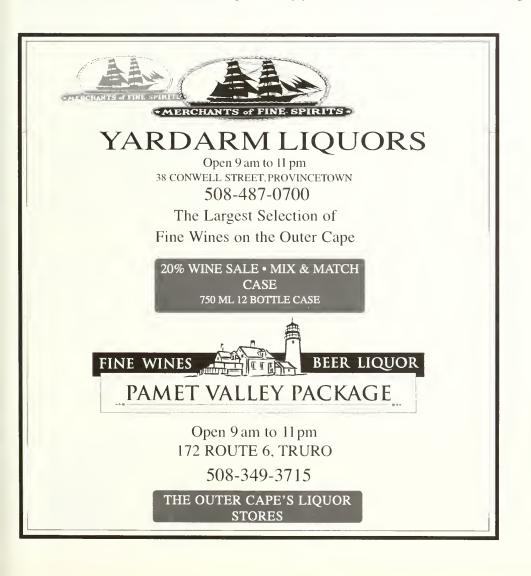
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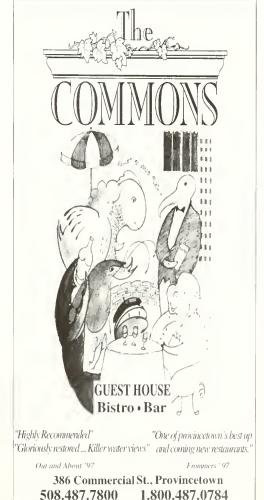




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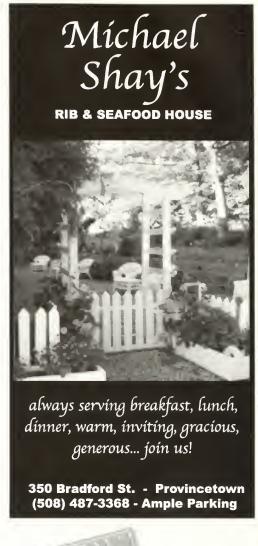
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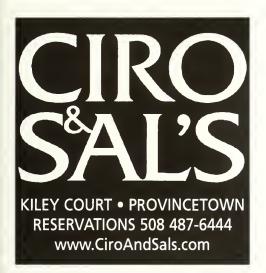
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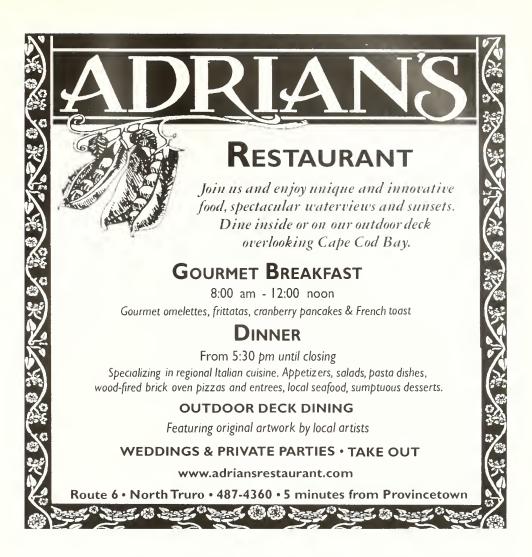
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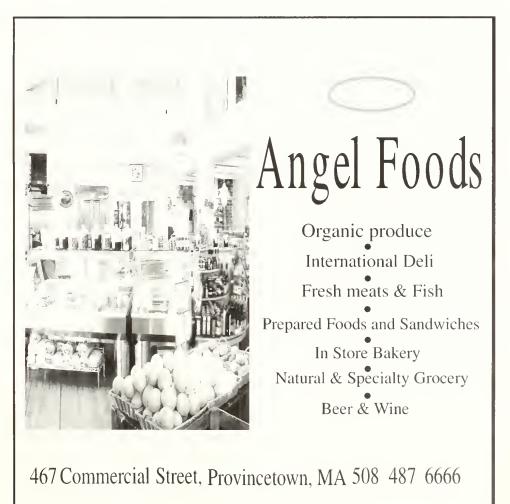
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